

W O M E N

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THEY ARE.

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES,

BY MRS. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF MYSTERIOUS WARNINGS, &c.

VOL. II.

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1855

A. ROBERT

IN FOUR VOLUMES

BY THE AUTHOR

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WOMEN AS THEY ARE.

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placed in the new-glass and in
from the laboratory, but especially
you are a **LETTER** on me I
and doubt of me I am, I am
and you are not a new-glass and in
back to the new-glass and in
and in the new-glass and in

“**WRITE** to you:” — what can I
write, but that I have a jealous
tyrant, who scrutinizes every look, tortures
every word into meanings which exist no
where but in his heated imagination! — A
pretty situation I am in! lectured by my
wife sister, watched by my jealous lord,
hated by the odious Lady Pen, talked at by

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B

dame

dame Nell, and treated coolly by the desponding Almeria.—And pray what are my mighty crimes?—Youth and beauty!

Is the fault mine, if kind nature has bestowed upon me charms to engage the admiration of the men? Because I am married, must I be locked up in a closet, or placed in a shew-glass, where folks may take a look at the divinity, but approach it not? If I am to live in the country, among owls and rooks,—if I am to climb the Welch mountains, with goats for my companions, I may as well put a mask upon my face, and peep through a bit of black velvet, as long as I live; for of what value is beauty, where there is no one to admire it?

If I were not the best-tempered creature in the world, you and my lord would ruin my disposition between you. You have reason to fear I am offended: you are conscious that you deserve my displeasure, for such terrible lectures and admonitions, for what?



what?—truly, nothing. Every pretty woman likes to be admired, is pleased to excite the envy of her own sex, and the adoration of the other; and where's the mighty guilt of being like other women?—a *coquet*, if you please. In short, I will be what I am, on *this side thirty*. Time enough to grow wife, prudent, and matronly, when that dreaded up hill is attained; then I shall be as humble as you desire me to be.

Gardner was officious and impertinent; and I have got rid of him. I did not care if all the men were at the devil, for they are eternal plagues one way or the other.—A fine scheme is adopted now. In two days we go to London, where I am to be exhibited like a raree-show, to please the old Earl, and then hurried away into Wales: instead of going into my own house, or at Bath, I am to make one in the train of the old formal Eleanor, among the Welch ignoramuses, their brother-goats; climb the rugged mountains, and “waste my sweetness

on the desert-air." If *you* can approve of this absurd folly, I shall set very little value upon your opinion in other points.

Did I marry to be buried among old men and tabbies? I tell you what, Mary, I am convinced, if my mother and Mrs. Cranfield had bestowed a tenth part of the money they gave Lord Gaywit, in introducing me with some éclat to the world, I might have selected who and where I pleased, for I begin now to know my own consequence, and find I have been sadly taken in. Gaywit is not the "lively rattle" you used to think him, but already begins to look as if he had the cares of the world upon him. True, he is fond enough, troublesomely so; but he is certainly unfashionably jealous, and wants no one to admire his wife but himself:—this conduct will not do, sister."

Sir James Nichols is gone. My wife lord did not like him; he is very wrong,—but enough of this subject. The old miser I mentioned to you has had his house burnt down,

down, and is run mad. Lord Scamper is in full flirtation with Lady Pen, whose dearest is going to take her down to the tin-mines to cure pilchards. The simple Maria stays with our old aunt, and is to be *my* companion :— may be so. She is calculated for the wilds and mountains. She wants you to write to her.

Miss Babbington and an Irish colonel are below. Any thing is better than my own company, so I must bid *you* adieu. I have written, as you desired, without inclination or amusement. Adieu once more, my dear Mary. Instead of sermonizing, write to entertain me, for I am horridly out of spirits. Address your letters at the Earl of Stanton's, Hanover-Square.

Your affectionate

C. M. G A R W I T.

LETTER II.

MISS. BOYLE TO MRS. ROWE.

THREE weeks are past, my beloved friend, since my last letter; and a fortnight since we left Glasgow, and our uncommon friends, Mr. Macniel and his niece. Never will their kindness be erased from my memory. Such attention to persons they had no knowledge of, by whom their civilities were not likely ever to be repaid, and who were recommended to them merely in the way of business, well warrants my calling them *uncommon* friends, and my gratitude is I hope proportioned to their deservings.

When

When they found no entreaties could prevail upon my father to remain in Glasgow, and that he had fixed upon the North of Scotland to reside in from motives of economy, Mr. Macniel recommended Elgin, which is rather in the middle division of Scotland than far to the North. He said his reasons for giving a preference to this spot were several; first, it was in general remarkably healthy, the summers pleasant, the winters mild; next, the necessaries of life were plentiful and cheap, and above all, because he knew a very worthy man, a clergyman, who resided in the town, who would be happy to exert himself in our service; and, should we feel inclined to go farther North, might have it in his power to recommend a desirable situation.

Those reasons were unanswerable, and Elgin was our destined route.

My father, with that avidity which marks a mind anxious by employment and bustle to get rid of leisure and reflection, lost no

B 4 time

time in settling his affairs; and, in six days after I concluded my last letter to you, we quitted Glasgow with sincere regret.—Our parting with the Macniel family was more like the separation of old and dear friends than the acquaintance of a month; but I have observed, on more occasions than one, how soon congenial minds will mingle, and an open ingenuous heart be understood. We took letters for the clergyman above mentioned, Mr. Ross. Miss Macintire solicited my correspondence with an earnestness that left no doubt of her sincerity.—I will own to you I had many regrets in quitting Glasgow, perhaps more than I can justify, when I had still my beloved parent by my side.

I shall not tire you with any account of our journey, or description of places already so much better and more accurately described, than it is possible for a young and superficial traveller like me to do. It is sufficient to say that we arrived in safety at

Elgin,

Elgin, without accident or robbers. Indeed, there appears to be so few travellers on the road, that there can be no temptations for robbers, and the carriages and horses are fitted to the country, pass over rugged roads, and high hills, with perfect ease.

On our arrival at the inn in Elgin, our first business was to send off our letter to Mr. Ross, who, in less than an hour, came to us. There is surely a greater spirit of hospitality existing among the Scotch than any other nation. A venerable old man, with frail silver locks, approached, and welcomed us with much cordiality. He insisted upon our removal to his house. "It is neither large nor well furnished, (said he,) but it is clean and weather-proof: I have no dainties to offer, but sweet and wholesome food I can ensure you; and your company I shall consider as an obligation: the friends of Mr. Macniel must be my friends also."

B. 5.

This.

This plea was unanswerable, and we accepted his proffered kindness without farther hesitation.

We passed through a very long and good street, the houses built upon arches, which, resting on pillars, form a piazza, and preserves you from the heat or inclemency of the weather.

The house of Mr. Rofs is situated at the end of the town, in a beautiful plain, at the foot of a high mount, on which stands the ruins of a once-magnificent castle. This hospitable, but humble, dwelling is about a quarter of a mile detached from the town: it consists of only two stories, with six rooms; every thing perfectly clean, and in repair, but altogether as plain and ancient as its worthy owner. Two servants, an elderly man, and a middle-aged woman, composed his household.

Here we received a welcome that might have put good-breeding and ostentation out of countenance. We were at home in ten minutes,

minutes, and in a short time had an excellent meal of delicious salmon, a piece of roasted mutton, and the best ale (as my father said) that ever was tasted. We had plenty of good fruit. "Wine (Mr. Rofs said) he had none, and not being *blessed* with "second sight," he could not divine he should have the honour of such guests."

After dinner, the servant, whose name is Annie, conducted me into the two bedrooms appointed for us,—cabbins you would have called them, for they are not more than ten feet square; but they had a recommendation we had not met with since our leaving Glasgow,—perfect cleanliness, in which it must be owned the lower orders of Scotch are but too deficient.

We passed a most agreeable evening. Mr. Rofs is both learned and intelligent: he is like an old chronicle of former times; his age and observation had furnished him with a number of anecdotes, a variety of information, that was really delightful;

and, from his description of Elgin and its environs, my father resolved to take a house here. Our good host promised to look about for us.

At nine o'clock he told us it was his custom to have prayers, and then retire to bed. We readily accorded with his rules: the servants were called in, and the good man repeated his prayers with such true piety and energy, pronounced his blessings with an elevation and confidence so inspiring, that I never was so much affected in all my life. Half-past nine was too early to expect rest, but we would not break in upon the good man's rules, though he offered the parlour, if we would excuse his absence. We retired to our rooms, and I had sufficient meditations to occupy my mind.

The next morning at nine we were again called to prayers, delivered with the most unaffected piety. After breakfast, I took a survey of the house and gardens. The first contained a parlour and study, with two
kitchens

kitchens behind, over which were four small bed-rooms; a detached brewhouse, with the man-servant's room, and a large poultry-yard. In the front was a small flower-garden; on one side, a large kitchen one, most amply supplied with vegetables and fruit-trees: every thing in perfect order.—How pleasant and tranquil must be the owner of this spot, living, thought I, without one corroding care!—I was mistaken, but of that hereafter.

In the course of that day, we found out a habitation, most charmingly situated, at a small distance from the Minister's, for by that name our host is distinguished in the town;—something more commodious than his in point of size, with a view of the beautiful river Liffie, on one side, from a little terrace in the garden;—in front, the town, and at the back rising hills, covered with pasture; a neat grass-plat before the house, with a hedge on each side of small underwood, which is kept cut to about six feet high,

high, and appears as thick as our quicksets. Eight rooms, with also a detached brew-house, (for every one here brews their own ale,) and a stable for a horse. And what think you we pay for this accommodation? Nine pounds a year, taxes included! Why, my dear Mrs. Rowe, I shall live here like a fairy queen. Mr. Rofs maintains his household upon five and thirty, and has something to spare for the stranger and traveller. Ninety pounds a year! 'tis affluence, 'tis riches, in a country where fish, wild fowl, and poultry, is procured for a trifle. Meat is proportionably cheap.

I am enchanted with our situation, which we took possession of three days ago, and have furnished it in a stile correspondent to the extreme simplicity of the dwelling.— And now, being comfortably settled, I must reserve farther particulars for my next, and turn to the subject of your letter.

In the first place, let me thank you for the fresh instance you have given of your
love

love and partiality for your grateful Mary. While I can boast of your approbation, and my conduct stands the test of your judgment, I shall feel a conscious satisfaction no little rubs of fortune can deprive me of. I am inexpressibly hurt at the implication you adduce from Mr. Gardner's opinion of my sister, because I know he is the valued friend of Lord Gaywit; but I will hope he is mistaken in Caroline, and interprets the playful gaiety of her disposition for a levity that would not fit well on a married woman. You know she has an amazing flow of animal spirits; and, being ever accustomed to indulge them without controul, she is not yet sufficiently domesticated to place them under proper restrictions. A letter from her followed me to Elgin yesterday. I had been very uneasy at not hearing from her. Long before this, she is in London, at the Earl of Stanton's, and I hope you will see her. As she is married, I trust you will wave ceremony, and call upon her; she might otherwise not know you are in town. From you
I shall

obtain an impartial judgment. At present I have no female acquaintance, but our good minister told me this morning, when speaking on this subject, that there was only one family in this town he thought worthy my acquaintance; "But (added he) it would be cruel to introduce a mind of sensibility to the children of sorrow."

"On the contrary, my dear sir, (returned I,) my present disposition is entirely calculated to participate with, and if possible console, them."

"Then (said he) I will contrive a meeting at my house. Delicacy is necessary to reconcile persons, under oppressive afflictions, to mix with others they may deem more rich and fortunate than themselves."

"Do things your own way, my dear sir, only be assured, that, if I did not hope to convey comfort, I would not intrude upon the unfortunate."

"Good young woman!" he called me, and withdrew.

My

My dear father begins to look more cheerful. He could not have a more desirable companion than Mr. Rofs, and I trust Providence has graciously raised good out of evil. The loss of fortune will lead to the restoration of our peace in this tranquil spot, equally remote from the great and gay world. I have much to communicate of local matters, but I dispatch this, that it may assure you of the health and true affection of

Your sincere friend,

MARY BOYLE.

LETTER

LETTER III.

MISS PENRICKARD TO MISS BOYLE.

FORGIVE this intrusion, madam, which

Lady Gaywit has commanded me, or I should not have the confidence to address you. Yesterday morning the good Earl of Stanton was taken exceeding ill of the gout in his head and stomach, and, before nine at night, he expired, to the great affliction of my lord and the whole family.

This event, we think, was greatly owing to the hurry he put himself in, and the bustle

bustle of attending Lord and Lady Gaywit, to be presented at court, three days ago, for he complained of being unwell that night.

My lord has requested his aunt, Mrs. Stanton, will stay in town with his lady, until they go to Wales, and was pleased to invite me also. Her ladyship, having much business in giving orders for mourning and necessary arrangements, requested me to convey to you this melancholy information. Poor Lady Almeria is inconsolable, for she dearly loved her father; but I think I know one more unhappy than herself, who has a father that does not care for her, and a mother in-law who despises and uses her ill:—is not this a painful situation, madam?

Lady Gaywit told me you would do me the honour to write to me. I shall be very much flattered by such an indulgence, for, indeed, madam, I have no friends, though I have two parents. My father is

is a very good man, but I was always kept at school till since he married his second lady, and never knew the tender care of a mother, or the affection of a sister.

I beg your pardon for troubling you with my griefs. Lady Gaywit (I should say the Countess, I believe) desires her duty to her father, and best love to you. She will write in a few days. I have the honour to remain,

Madam,

Your most obedient Servant,

MARIA PENRICKARD.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

THE COUNTESS OF STANTON TO, MISS

BOYLE,

THREE days ago I gave the little Maria an opportunity she had languished for, of opening a correspondence with the sage Miss Boyle. If you had my plagues, indeed, there would be room for gravity. I assure you, I am doubly grieved at the Earl's death just now, notwithstanding it increases my consequence.

Only think of being presented at court last week! my mourning laid aside two of the most elegant court-dresses made up, several

several others bespoke ! The Earl presented me with the family-jewels, and I glittered like a diamond of the first magnitude,—outshone every woman present in beauty and figure,—was the admiration and envy of the whole drawing-room ;—engaged to make my appearance at Ranelagh this very day, and *now*, by this premature death, all my glories are obscured ! I must again put on odious black : my clothes will be out of fashion, my diamonds wrapped in cotton, and I shall not have an opportunity of appearing in public again for this season ;—and if all those vexatious circumstances are not sufficiently tormenting, the ridiculous Stanton insists upon my going into the country on Saturday, two days previous to the funeral proceffion, as the late Earl is to be buried in the family-vault near Stanton-Place.

I am sure he may as well brick me up likewise as take me down there again. I positively will go to some watering place this summer,

summer, let him think what he pleases.— Here is that Niobe, Almeria, fastened upon me, too, weeping and wailing all the day long,—a charming companion to enliven one's solitary hours in the country. Very little pleasure has matrimony, rank, and title, afforded me, but it is my own fault if I submit to become stationary among the old oaks. If his fortune is increased, so is my consequence, and I am determined he shall know it, nor will I stay a week in the country without I can draw a circle round me such as I like.

This morning came that hateful Lady Pen. Out of compliment to the Earl's memory, they stay in town a fortnight, to provide themselves with mourning. She had the audacity to tell me “She had a private party of friends last night, Sir James Nichols, Lord Scamper, Lady this, that, and t’other.” O’trous woman! I wish her fool of a husband would take her down, and barrel her up with his pilchards.

I am

I am so out of humour, that I could quarrel with every one, only that it discomposes one's features. Our old aunt, with her grimaces, is to go down with us for a week, and then takes herself off without me.

Mary, I am provoked beyond all endurance. I have had such a quarrel with my lord, that, if he does not come down with his penitentials, and behave otherwise, I positively will make him repent of it.

He came into my dressing-room just now, with a dismal-looking face, as long as my arm. "Bless me! (I cried,) you look enough to frighten one, my lord; you give me the horrors every time you appear."

"I am extremely sorry, madam, that my countenance is not fortunate enough to please you: it is a true picture of my mind, I believe, which is far from being happy. I have lost a worthy and an affectionate father; *yes*, indeed, might I might mitigate, my affliction, if you thought it

it worth your while to pay any attention to me ; but *you* find a pleasure in adding to my distress, by your ill-humour and careless deportment to me."

"If you came here to find fault and upbraid me, my lord, I can excuse your absence. I am sure I am as sorry for the Earl's death just now as you can be : it has broken in upon all *my* plans of amusement, and therefore enough to put any one out of humour. As to paying attention to you, I do not understand your meaning ; you would not have me always cooing about you, like a turtle billing with its mate ?"

"No, madam, (he replied, with an insolent haughty air ;) *I* expect no such marks of tenderness from you ; *you* choose to reserve your endearments for a more favoured object."

Now you must know, sister, he had the meanness to allude to a little accident that happened when the old miser's house was on fire. I run into the wilderness, to look

at the flames, and was so terrified, that I was taken faint, and, had not Sir James Nichols supported me into a small temple just by, I should certainly have fallen. — My lord came by at the moment, and his jealousy conjured this trifling accident into a serious affair, and has given himself a thousand airs about it ever since.

Provoked at his insinuation, I replied, “When men are mean enough to watch their wives, to set an officious friend as a spy upon their actions, and translate the innocent gaiety of their hearts into imprudence, and an accidental illness into design and impropriety,—no wonder if wives so treated should turn from an object they must think of with contempt.”

Perhaps, Mary, I was a little too severe; but consider the temper I was in, and my provocations.

“By heaven! (he exclaimed,) this is too much to bear! — “Contempt,” madam! contempt can only be attached to me in

consequence of your imprudence ; but this is not a time for altercations ; my mind is not fitted *now* to enter upon subjects which must be discussed hereafter in a proper manner. Heaven can witness for me that I *have*, that I *still* love you to adoration ; that you have the power of making me the happiest of men ; but I swear to you, (added he with vehemence) that you shall not render me contemptible, though you may destroy my peace."

He flung out of the room very abruptly, and left me irritated to the last degree.

Never was there a greater deception than in this man's character ; gay, lively, and entertaining, all life and spirits ; I was "an angel," a goddess, the ruler of his destiny, the sovereign of his heart !—and here, in the space of less than three months, he is become — a very husband ; cheerfulness is the utmost he can boast as a substitute for the most delightful vivacity ; a polite tenderness for rapturous adoration,

C 2 and

and a captious monopolizing spirit supercedes an apparently candid and liberal mind.

Not the slightest alteration has taken place in me. I never professed to be passionately *fond* of *him*; he was a gay, elegant, young man,—a lord: my friends thought him a desirable connexion; I believed the same. He *adored* me as *I was*, and I am still the same,—very lively, very handsome, (my glass and all the world confirm it,) fond of dreses, of amusements, of admiration; like to make fools of one sex, and envious, mortified, poor devils of the other.

Pray where is the criminality of all this? All those passions, or rather frolics, will subside in time. I shall grow tired of them when the novelty ceases, and then, by way of variety, I may take up the odd whim of being domesticated, and “bestow my attentions” on my Proteus of a husband.”

Depend

Depend upon it, Mary, I have not a spirit to bear provocations, and my lord may find his humiliations will be proportioned to the affronts he has given me.— I am sure the solemnity of this house is enough to give one the horrors, without being tormented by his tiresome impertinence.

You are going to ramble about. O Mary, how I envy you ! Variety is the greatest enjoyment of life. Here, like a poor bird, made a prisoner for the remainder of my days, I only change one cage for another, as it suits the convenience of my keeper ; with no chance for liberty, unless by resolution and perseverance I break the wires of my cage.

Once more I protest I will not remain at the old family-mansion, with old tabbies and sentimental misses.

I have written as you requested, and because I must have given vent to the swellings of my heart, or it would have

C 3 burst ;

burst; but do not terrify yourself; the vexatious fit is over: I will keep my temper to torment others: I will be as calm, as polite, as any woman of the most refined good breeding; but as flatly and scornful as a tragedy-queen. I cannot cry, and I must not laugh, so have nothing for it but my reserve and haughtiness.

You may lecture me if you will, for you are at a distance; but it would be ungenerous to do so. Because my frankness points the weapons, a generous mind would strike them from me, and permit confession to atone for the little foibles natural to youth, beauty, and offended pride. In this expectation I subscribe myself,

Dear Mary,

Your affectionate Sister

C. M. STANTON.

Of

Of all the birds in the air, who do you think called and left a card just now?—Our quondam governess, and *your* favourite, Mrs. Rowe. She is in town with her uncle.

LETTER V.

MISS BOYLE TO MRS. ROWE.

YESTERDAY, after I had dispatched my letter to you, I accompanied my father and Mr. Rofs in a walk to the mount that overlooks the town, the adjacent country, and almost hangs over our neat dwelling. The ascent was steep and difficult, but patience and perseverance, sharpened by curiosity, carried me through a

C 4

very

very fatiguing attempt. I was well rewarded for my toil. It is impossible to give you an adequate description of the various beauties of the scenery beneath : the river presents an extensive serpentine, through a beautiful vale ; then, winding amidst lofty hills, appears on the other side, rolling gently down into a deep wooded glen.

Another part flows round the two sides of the town, with a handsome stone bridge. The town itself has a good appearance, with the ruins of a stately cathedral, once a most magnificent building. From thence, turning round, we beheld a wide extent of country, even to the sea, with an interfection of woods, hills, and dales, forming the most enchanting landscape in nature.

After regaling our eyes for some time with this variety of prospects, we entered the castle through a noble portico, one side of which laid in ruins. The elevated situation of this castle was not deemed sufficient for its security : it had once been surrounded

surrounded with a deep moat, which was now nearly filled up by the depredations which time had made on the buildings. — We took a very curfory view of the apartments, as we had expended so much time in walking and observation, that we were apprehensive night would steal upon us before we could get home; and, as I now was acquainted with the road to it, I determined to take an opportunity of examining it at leisure, without any danger of interruption from curiosity or impertinence.

We returned to our house, extremely satisfied with our walk, though much fatigued. Our friendly minister passed the evening with us, whose cheerful piety and humble resignation have already, I think, produced the happiest effects upon my father's mind. As I am on this subject, I will give you the history of Mr. Rofs, in his own words.

C 5

"MY

“MY father was descended from an ancient and honourable family. His elder brother unhappily attached himself to the Stuart family, and fell a sacrifice to that unfortunate cause, in which the whole of his connexions were involved. My father, reduced in circumstances, with several children, endeavoured to educate them in habits of economy and industry. Success attended his wishes; all were provided for, though in a humbler manner than the pride of ancestry might have expected.

“Educated for the church, when of proper age, I had a small living given to me, near Edinburgh. At the age of two and thirty I married an amiable woman, who had a handsome estate left her by a relation, on whom she had no expectations.

“This person had one son, who, passionately fond of the navy, had prevailed on his father to let him take a voyage to India. It was with infinite reluctance he consented; and, after two years of miserable anxiety, he

he was informed his son, in company with two others, had gone up the country, and were never afterwards heard of. The general supposition was that they had been destroyed by some of the Indian army. The old gentleman survived this news but a short time, and, dying, left his fortune to his nearest relation. I had the happiness of being distinguished by her. We married, and for years lived in affluence and uninterrupted felicity.

“ I had three children, a son and two daughters. My son was bred to the law, and had just begun to practise when we became acquainted with the Macniel family, who were settled at Glasgow. Miss Macintire and my Edward conceived a mutual attachment; her fortune was handsome, her connexions unexceptionable. My son's prospects of happiness elevated me to rapture and thankfulness. Alas! blind, vain mortals, as we are, indulging in hopes of fancied bliss, and looking forward to romantic expectations

expectations of felicity, in the very moment when a thunder-bolt is breaking over our heads to crush them at once.

“My darling, my duteous, son one morning set off for Glasgow, to see his intended bride, a fortnight previous to the wedding. By some accident he was thrown from his horse, and killed on the spot. To dwell on scenes like these is only taxing the feeling heart unnecessarily : the distress of both families was unspeakable. *I* fought consolation in the duties of my profession, and laid down my sorrows at the feet of the Almighty.

“My wife’s tender constitution sunk under her affliction, and for many weeks I despaired of her life : at length, the tenderness and attention of her family and friends seemed to be flattered with hopes of her recovery, when another blow put a final period to a well-spent life, and was the climax of my miseries.

One

“One morning I was told three gentlemen waited for me in the parlour. I attended them, and to my infinite surprise was informed one of them was the son so long given up as dead, and heir to the estate I was then in possession of in right of my wife. One of the gentlemen who accompanied him was a native of India, who had returned with him to England in a ship of which the other was commander.

“He acquainted me that himself and two others, going on a shooting party into the interior part of the country, were surrounded and taken prisoners, carried away to a very distant part, where they had been kept in confinement many years, and were at last released to assist in making some public roads. In this station they remained always so closely watched, as to render an escape impossible; nor did there once offer, in the course of six and twenty years, an opportunity of conveying any information to their friends. Despair, at length, had almost

almost annihilated hope and desire. One of his companions died, and the other began to droop, when a sudden and unexpected revolution took place in their affairs, by the gentleman now with him; who, being employed by the factory to visit England on business of consequence, requested that he might have the liberty of choosing two Englishmen to go in his suite. The choice fell on those two unfortunates.

“In their voyage, he had made himself known to the India gentlemen, who promised to accompany him into Scotland.— On his arrival at Perth, where his father’s estate laid, he had information of his death, and the disposal of his fortune, which he now came to claim the restitution of.

“This story, so plain and simple, admitted of no doubts of its authenticity, yet duty to my family required unequivocal proofs, which the gentleman allowed to be but reasonable. A very few days settled his claims beyond all possibility of dispute, and

and he had a fair right to demand all the arrears ; but this, knowing the impossibility of our refunding, and, impelled by the most generous consideration, he never once asked for ; but, with a peculiar nobleness, desired we would take our own time for removing our property, and, in the handsomest manner, insisted upon the first following year's rent being divided between himself and my two girls, that they might have a trifle of their own. My wife now fell back into her former weakness ; this sudden alteration in our fortune gave a finish to the lingering stroke of death, and her spirit fled to a blessed eternity.

“ My friends, the good Machiels, flew to console me. In truth, the wounds were deep that pierced my bosom,—a son, a wife, and whole fortune, all lost in the space of one poor short month ! the world to begin again at a time of life and in a state of mind ill calculated to struggle for the support of my poor girls. My friends knew the

the conflict of my mind : to remain there, where I had lost all my treasures, was impossible, and I resolved to exchange my situation for a distant and more retired spot. When they found my resolution was unshaken, they endeavoured to serve me in my own way. This church of Elgin was soon after offered to my acceptance, which I joyfully embraced, contrary to the wishes and remonstrances of my friends.

The moiety of a year's rent, forced upon my daughters, I was compelled to let them accept ; and, through the interest and unwearied exertions of the good Macniels, they were settled at Inverness, in a boarding-school, where, thank heaven, they live comfortable and respectable. My whole income exceeds not forty pounds a year : on that I live, free of obligation, with the love and respect of my flock, and a trifle to assist the sick and aged. Memory is yet too faithful to me to admit of happiness, but I enjoy tolerable health ; I endeavour, by active

active duties among my parishioners, to blunt the edge of past misfortunes, when they obtrude upon my recollection; and the decent independence my children enjoy renders me grateful to Providence for the *good* I receive; the *evil* I support with patience and resignation."

Such was the simple narration of Mr. Ross, and more sorrowful events could scarcely be crowded into so short a story. It is impossible to look at him without reverence, or hear him without esteem. I thought him at the first view near fourscore: he is not yet seventy. Sorrow and study have advanced decrepitude more in appearance than reality, for he climbed to the mount with as little fatigue as a man of fifty. Since the communication of his story, my father does not dwell so much on his own misfortunes, a proof that, when the human mind can take a just survey of the comparative happiness between himself and others, balancing the apparent felicity of some with the wretchedness

ness that thousands endure, whose claims were not inferior to his own. He will, if endowed with reason, patiently kiss the rod of affliction, and learn to extract good out of evil.

To-morrow we visit our revered friend, and are to meet the lady and her daughter mentioned to me as children of sorrow : they live in a very poor and a very retired habitation, receive no visitors but Mr. Rofs ; and we are solely indebted to his good word for the indulgence of meeting, which is a breach, he says, of an established rule : he would take no denial on their part, because he was convinced our acquaintance would prove an acquisition to both, for which both would be thankful.

I have this moment a letter from a young lady who is on a visit at Earl Stanton's, with intelligence of the Earl's sudden death of the gout in his stomach. I am very sorry to hear it ; the general report was much in his favour, and my sister is deprived of a friend.

She

She has indeed acquired a title and a superior fortune, but I fear such acquisitions will not counterbalance the loss, for she wanted neither, and the loss of a friend is not easily repaired.

I must now address my sister as the Countess Stanton, and thank my young informant for her polite letter Farewell, my amiable Mrs. Rowe; believe me ever

Your sincere and obliged

MARY BOYLE.

My father always requests his best remembrance, though I may sometimes unpardonably omit to mention it.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

COUNTESS STANTON TO MISS BOYLE.

WITHOUT the power of helping myself,—here I am dragged into the odious country again, surrounded only by dismal faces and mournful preparations ; my bridal joys have been few indeed, and it seems as if my unlucky stars were at work to weave melancholy events purposely to disappoint and mortify me.

All my clothes are out of season, and out of fashion ; my name scarcely known, and my person like a meteor just blazing for
once

once to dazzle the eye, and then enveloped in fable clouds of obscurity; and you and my wife lord would have me be perfectly content, play the good housewife, and stay at home to comfort my deeree. At eighteen you would have me a sober domesticated animal;—impossible, my dear Mary! it is out of nature and out of reason to expect it. Things must change soon; I must either emerge from the gloom that furrounds me, or close the tragedy, by throwing myself into the brook: then indeed I shall make an éclat.

Yesterday we *stole* out of town by six in the morning. The Earl, Almeria, and myself, in the coach; Mrs. Eleanor and Maria in the chariot;—no beaux, nor belles, a stupid humdrum party. To-morrow the funeral will be over, and I hope then the weeping and sighing will be over also.

Another smart altercation between my lord and his humblelady, in which the former had the worst, and was at length brought to

to proper behaviour. "My dearest Caroline, why will you ingeniously contrive to make me miserable? The study of my life will be to render you happy. Let me but flatter myself that I possess your heart and your esteem;—only pay that respect to yourself and to my peace, by discouraging the freedoms and impertinent behaviour of libertine men, and I will forget the cruel scene which you say was accidental, and restore you that love and confidence that to withhold must make me wretched."

Here was a fine pompous speech! Pray, Mary, did you ever think my lord was an orator? I am sure he breaks upon me in a new character every day; and, as I dearly love variety, perhaps he may at length assume some form to please me; for, to be sure, the man is well enough in person, and tolerable in temper, when he lets me follow "my own dear will." Having nobody to play off against him, nobody to say a civil word to me, I at length graciously condescended

scended to be something more civil, said a silly thing or two, and now we are the best friends in the world ; but I will not pass another month in the country, remember that, my good lord.

What provokes me horridly is, that Lady Pen should be in town, flaunting about with Sir James, and nobody knows who, when I am persuaded, had a certain relation of your's appeared in public, the conceited forward creature would not have had a single dangler. That old blundering fool, Sir Roger, had much better take her to his tinnets and fishermen, than trust her among the rakes of fashion.

I was broken in upon by Maria tapping at the door. " Well, child, what news ? "

" Only, madam, that Sir William Allen and *Miss* Babbington are at the door. I took the message from your servant, who waits to know if they are to be admitted."

" Oh !

“ Oh ? certainly ; I do not know that any forms should prescribe a denial to one’s friends in the country ;” so I hastened to receive them, taking the chit with me,— I *did* put on a demure countenance however, suitable to the looks of my visitors, (who, I understood afterwards, did not expect to be admitted,) for the late Earl was very generally beloved in this neighbourhood.

Mutual compliments passed in a *dolorous* way. *Miss* said, “ She should have congratulated herself on my return to Stanton-Placé, had any other than the present melancholy occasion brought me there.”

I could have whispered her, that nothing less would have brought me here again so soon.

“ I have compliments for you, my dear Lady Stanton, (said she, simpering, bridling, and twisting her fingers round a lilac ribbon, that tied down an elegant chip-hat, shading a brown and shrivelled skin from the

the rays of the sun. Colonel O'Clabber escorted me to your gate, where I met Sir William : at this time he would not intrude, therefore I undertook to make his respects."

"I am much obliged to the Colonel, madam. Pray does he make ~~any~~ stay in this neighbourhood?"

The poor creature was absolutely alarmed at the question, as if she suspected I intended to rival her. "O dear, yes!—no, indeed, I can't tell.—He only came down on a fishing-party."

"He is an acquaintance of your's?"

"Why,—yes,—we are acquainted certainly *now* ; but I have only known him a fortnight."

I did not urge the point, as I saw she was extremely confused ; and, as sure as you live, this Irish colonel (if he is a colonel) has a design upon Miss Babbington's fortune and old mansion-house ; and she, by this time, I should think, tired of being a

miss, will readily exchange both to become a colonel's lady. Well, let her have the bauble, and then perhaps she will modernise a little ; at present she wants only a ruff and a fardingale to be a complete original.

Thank heaven ! the dismal procession is over, the body is committed to its mother-earth, followed by the general lamentation of the neighbourhood. The character of the late Earl is revered ; his lady's, the mother of *my* earl, quite adored. Will their successors in the titles and estates be equally respectable ?—I shrink from the question ; yet why ? Perhaps, in their juvenile days, *they* had *their* follies and indiscretions, which a ripper age and a maturer judgment might obliterate by acts of hospitality and benevolence. It is not so difficult to purchase a good name as one would imagine. For the first five and thirty years of my life, I will be talked of and admired for the charms of my person.

son. In the down-hill of youth and beauty, I may possibly become a Lady Bountiful, search over all the old receipts in the family, and dwindle into the physician and nurse of the village. Thus, by prudent management, I may secure admiration and homage as long as I live; but my years of flirtation must have their full swing first, in spite of the remonstrances of my grave sister and changeling lord.

I have just been looking in on Lady Almeria. I have been greatly deceived in this brother and sister. One appeared a lively, thoughtless, agreeable, fellow; the other, gossip Fame reported, was nothing more than a vain gay coquet. They have undergone a strange metamorphose. I am sure.

This Almeria is as sedate and penfive as "patience on a monument," and, like Viola, "never told her love;" for in love she certainly is with Sir James; and now that her fortune, which, by her father's

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will

will, is much more considerable than was expected, is in her own power, thirty thousand pounds may be a temptation to him or any man; yet I should hate Sir James if he could be induced to pay his addressee to her. At any rate, Sir William Allen may hang himself on the next green willow, and a very pretty one there is, by the side of a brook, near our mansion, for *his hopes* are blighted for ever!

At present, however, she seems more likely to be dissolved by her tears, and wasted to a skeleton from want of nourishment, than ever to become a substantial bride. She really doated on her father, like somebody else that I have in my mind's eye.

After to-morrow, our doors will be open to our friends, or any living soul that will have charity enough to drop in upon us, Dieu merci!

I am

I am half dead with the vapours, as you may easily discern by this stupid epistle, which I shall close with telling you my lord and his dear Caroline are at present upon mighty good terms; — but to-morrow ends my penance!

Adieu, my dear Mary: I am hourly expecting to hear from you. Stanton joins me in duty and love; *you* are a great favourite.

Your affectionate

C. M. STANTON.

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LETTER

LETTER VII.

THE EARL STANTON TO BEVIL GARDNER,

ESQ.

My dear Gardner,

I WANT your society and counsel. The poet says, "Secrets of marriage should be sacred held;" but I could not conceal from you my inquietudes, my suspicions; I ought not then, in justice to my wife, to be silent when I have more agreeable prospects. She has assured me, on her honour, that an accidental meeting, and the fright of the fire, threw her into the situation with Sir James which gave me such horrid suspicions,

suspensions, and has occasioned such heart-felt uneasiness, as almost to destroy my temper. I cannot but believe her, and, at this season, deeply affected as I am for the loss of an affectionate parent, every little mark of attention from this dear charming woman is doubly dear to my heart.

She has an utter aversion to the country. I do not dote on it myself, yet, with her and a circle of friends, I could be well contented to remain here all the summer. My aunt urges me to fulfil my promise of escorting her into Wales, but I fear the plan will not be agreeable to my Caroline; it met not with her approbation when first mentioned. I know her wishes point towards a watering-place, and my sister's spirits seem so greatly depressed, that I think such a change would be of infinite service to her.

She is independent, with thirty thousand pounds, besides expectancies from my aunt, yet it is her wish to reside with me and

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Lady-

Lady Stanton, a proof of her affection and prudence that greatly pleases me.

I think that if I make a *point* of it, my wife will remain here, if I can draw a pleasant circle around me ; but *shall* I make a *point* of it, or follow her lead, and attend her, to a watering-place ? Perhaps a bachelor is not the most competent to advise a married man ; but you are my friend, and a minute observer of the human heart,—a study that never gave me a moment's thought ; therefore I ask, what would be the course *you* would pursue in *my* situation ? When this dear creature smiles and is attentive to me, I have no will but her's ; her coldness, or seeming displeasure, distracts me.

She will, she must, be admired wherever she goes. She is gay and *fond* of admiration :—can I bear the buz of fops or the assiduities of libertines ? I fear not ; for love has made me tenacious and suspicious, and a little knowledge of the world convinces

me

me there are many men who would glory in drawing the affections of this charming woman from her husband. What then shall I do? is the question that recurs, and which I entreat the solution of from you.

Where are the Penricksards, the Granthams, Sir James, and others of our old acquaintance? If I believe my wife, (and I will not doubt her veracity,) I must have appeared as a ridiculous jealous puppy to Sir James. I do not *wish* to fall in with him again; if I do, I must certainly treat him with a politeness that may throw a veil over my former folly; for what man could have declined the transport of assisting such a woman as Lady Stanton?—none but a Stoic or a madman. Either come or write to me immediately. Dear Gardner,

Sincerely yours,

STANTON.

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LETTER VIII.

COUNTESS STANTON TO MISS BOYLE.

NEWS, news, my dear Mary ! I am so pleased, so surprised !— Bles me ! I have such a number of pleasant circumstances to relate, that I hardly know where to begin ; but dear scandal shall have the preference.

Know then, that Lady Penrickard is eloped from her old man, and with whom, think you ? — that strange mad jockey, Lord Scamper, after an acquaintance of a fortnight. By this time it is supposed they
are

are safe in Paris, having been traced to Dover. There's a woman of spirit! — married about six months, and run away from her husband with an animal almost equally contemptible! I had no idea the creature would have left "Harlequin" for the finest woman in the kingdom; but I protest the world is full of deceptions.

When Stanton came to my apartment, with a letter in his hand, shaking his wife noddle, and, with a face as long as my arm, began to relate "the very *shocking* intelligence of Lady Penrickard's elopement," I declare my heart was in a strange flutter, for I concluded Sir James Nichols was the hero of the tale; but, when he added, "with Lord Scamper," I burst into a violent fit of laughter, which discomposed his gravity.

"Fie! my dear Caroline, is this a subject for mirth? Do you forget Lady Penrickard is related to me, and the disgrace attached to such an imprudent step?" —

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"Pardon

"Pardon me, (I cried, unable to command my ribbidity,) I can think of nothing but the ridiculous Scamper mistaking her ladyship for one of his "High-fliers;" but perhaps he found she liked racing as much as himself, and the jockey had more charms for her than the sober-pacing of her old knight."—Again I laughed heartily.

"I am ashamed of you, Lady Stanton, to indulge mirth on such an occasion, where disgrace and infamy must attend one of your own family connexions, and the happiness of a worthy inoffensive man is entirely destroyed."

"Well, well, I shall be very serious presently; but pray how does old Roger de Coverly behave under his *wonderful* misfortune?"

"The poor man is nearly distracted, for you know he doated on the ungrateful woman; and her father, I am sure, will be extremely miserable: see therefore how wide
the

the extent of misery an unprincipled woman may convey among her friends."

"Is this an observation, or meant as a lesson, my dear lord?—But no matter, a *word* to the wife you know is sufficient;—the hint is not lost. But tell me, does Maria know this important news?"

"No; that task must devolve upon you, and, as *you* treat it so lightly, perhaps the intelligence may be less shocking than from me. She has accompanied my aunt on a visit to Miss Babbington."

He had scarcely spoken, before a tapping at my dressing-room door, and the entrance of Maria, in the greatest agitation, attracted his attention. He was about to withdraw, the letter still in his hand;—

"Oh! stay, my lord! (cried she,) tell me, I beseech you, have you heard any thing relative to my father and Lady Penrickard?"

"Sit down by me, my dear, (said I; Lord Stanton, pray satisfy her."

"Compose

“Compose yourself, Miss Penrickard ; what have *you* heard to terrify you thus ?”

“Ah ! my lord, Miss Babbington has just received a letter from London, with the scandalous tale of Lady Penrickard’s elopement with Lord Scamper. She repeated it to us, and I prevailed on Mrs. Stanton to return with me immediately. I hope it is not true, yet I know not what to believe : has any such information reached you ?”

After a few preparatory softenings, he read to her an extract from the letter. She burst into tears, and was greatly agitated.

“My dear girl, (said I,) do not distress yourself. We cannot help her folly : she never behaved well to you, and your father will soon get reconciled to the loss of his gay helpmate, I dare say.”

“O madam ! (cried the romantic chit,) was she no ways related to me, I should grieve for her depravity, and blush at the disgrace she draws on her sex ; but, when I consider

I consider that her conduct must make my poor father miserable, who so dearly loved her, I am very unhappy; and, with your leave, will instantly fet off to comfort him, if I can."

Stanton darted an eye-beam upon me at the first part of this speech, which you will allow was ridiculous in the application.—One should have enough to do, to be eternally blushing for the misconduct of others; for my part, I think it is quite sufficient if we have grace enough to blush for ourselves; and who is the phoenix that can boast she is immaculate in thought, word, and deed? I verily believe, if such a being *does exist*, it *may be* my sister.

And now I mention this, tell me, dear Mary, how it comes to pass that I can do justice to all your good qualities, acknowledge that you are wise, prudent, pleasing, agreeable, and instructive; and yet do not find the smallest inclination within me to study

study such parts of your character as are really estimable? I will sport my opinion on the subject, you may set me right if I err.

I have always observed, when introduced into company, that *I* attracted the general observation. I have heard it whispered, “Miss Boyle is a very pleasing, interesting, young woman; but Caroline is the most charming creature nature ever formed.”—Miss Boyle has engaged attention and respect,—Miss Caroline, admiration and rap-
ture.

My dear sister, when I could see frivolity in a beautiful face was more attractive than good sense in a really agreeable one, what encouragement had I to study wisdom, pore over musty folios, and dim the lustre of my eyes, when assured that I was perfectly charming in the indulgence of my habitual idleness? If I am wrong, blame my mother, my aunt, every person who visited at the house; all helped to satisfy
me

me with myself; all contributed to feed that vanity my glass had given birth to; and, in short, whilst men will admire me as a Venus, I have no ambition to figure in a character so little valued in the great world as Minerva; and this accounts for the affection I feel for you, divested of every degree of envy.

But to return. Stanton praised the silly girl's sensibility, but entreated her to remain with us until he had written to Sir Roger, as he felt very much hurt that an acquaintance, began in his father's house, had terminated so disreputably to the family. She acquiesced to what he thought most proper, and retired quite in the dilemma to "comfort" with Lady Almeria.— Blame me or not, as you please, but I own the frolic of Lady Pen has not disquieted *me*, for I shrewdly suspected she had other views, which, if gratified, would have given me unspeakable vexation. But enough of this.

Well,

Well, all this hurly-burly took place yesterday, and I endeavoured to comport myself suitably to the dismal faces of the family, who felt mortified in their *own* consequence being hurt, — not that they cared a rush for my sweet Lady Pen. This morning we were all assembled in the breakfast-parlour, when dame Eleanor's woman came into the room, (as great an original as her mistress;) the poor thing had just been told a violent secret, and found it impossible to retain it a moment. "I beg your pardon, madam, (advancing to her mistress,) but I have this very instant heard that Miss Babbington was married last night, by a specialty licence, to that there Colonel O'Clabber, that is lately come into these parts."

"Impossible! (cried aunt Nell;) she *can-*
not have been so indecorous as to marry a man upon so short an acquaintance, and in the *evening* too! — O monstrous! at her age:—it can't be true, Martha."

Martha

Martha protested she had it from the wife of the parish-clerk, who had called on purpose to tell her the very *great secret*.

Martha having eased her bosom of the intolerable load, withdrew, and every one made their comments on *Miss Babbington's* marriage. Poor dear aunty was so scandalized at such *forward* doings in an *old miss*, who ought to have regarded decency and decorum, being of the *last age*, that hands and eyes were uplifted in wonder and disgust:—"A fly creature! never to drop a hint yesterday morning to *me*."

"Very unpardonable indeed! (cried I,) for the old song says, "Going to one wedding begetteth another;" consequently, in Christian charity, *you* ought to have been her bride-maid."

"Lady Stanton, you may spare *your* jibes at *me*; if I had been as forward as some folks I could name, I might have been a wife many years ago, when wives were *respectable* &c.

respectable; now there is but little credit attached to the name."

My audacious lord looked pleased at the rebuke: I smiled in contempt, but, declining to "*fit on the cap*," answered with seeming unconcern, "You are perfectly right, madam, matrimony confers neither honour nor pleasure now-a-days."

"*You*, of *all* women, are least entitled to make the observation," said she, in wrath, and bounced out of the room, doubtful to question Martha more closely. I laughed aloud; my lord was disconcerted, and the two misses looked at each other without speaking. For my part, I am glad to extract mirth out of any silly circumstance to preserve my temper among such woe-begons.

Some time before dinner, walking with the pensive Almeria, and the no less melancholy Maria, my lord joined us; and, after a little conversation, observed that the

the country was not favourable to depressed spirits, and, particularly at this time, Stanton-Place must inspire sorrow and regret; therefore, if agreeable to my ladyship, his dear sister, Maria, and his aunt, he would propose an excursion (Oh! how my heart fluttered!) to Scarborough."

I would much sooner he had said Bath, but any place rather than aunt Nell's Welch cottage, or castle, must be a desirable exchange; so I very graciously said, "I had no objection to a plan so considerate for our mutual accommodation."

Almeria prettily replied, "Any situation with her dear brother and friends must be agreeable to her."

"You are very good to me, sir, (said the poor April-faced Maria;) but it is my duty to attend on my father now, when he is so afflicted."

"Perhaps, (returned my lord,) Sir Roger may be prevailed upon to accompany us."

"Then,

“Then, indeed, (cried she eagerly,) I shall be most happy to attend these dear ladies.”

Dame Eleanor was next to be consulted. Had she and her maid Martha been left out of the party, some folks would not have been sorry; but I am determined just now to be very condescending, therefore shall raise no objections.

We were just seated at the dinner-table, when Sir Roger Penrickard was announced. Maria jumped from her chair, and flew to meet him. He entered the room, pressed her in his arms, and blubbered like a great boy. Seating himself, and wiping his eyes, “A fad affair, my lord, a very fad affair!--Who could have believed such a dear sweet woman as my lady would have turned out so ungracious, and deserted me, who loved her so dearly, who gave her such a deal of money, to make ducks and drakes of, as one may say; and then that lord there, who talked of nothing

nothing but horses, who could have thought he would have turned out such a rogue as to carry off another man's wife. A horse I would not have trusted him with, but I never suspected him with my wife.—He has made me a miserable man,—what can I do, my lord? I comed down on purpose to ask your advice, for, as I may say, I have a right to it, because you are her relation, and because it was here she feed that wicked man.”

The old man had again recourse to his handkerchief, when his eloquence was exhausted, Stanton took his hand very cordially: “Believe me, Sir Roger, I am little less grieved than yourself at this disreputable business; but let us dine, and in the afternoon we will talk further upon the affair. You have a right to my best services.

“I thank you, my lord; this is very friendly, but I cannot eat, not I; my heart

heart is almost broken, I am sure, when I think of it."

With a little farther persuasion he seated himself at the table, and swallowed some soup; but he really looked so distressed, that, though his complaints were truly ludicrous, I commanded my countenance very tolerably. He had not, it seems, received my lord's letter, but the lady's father being in Ireland, he had no one to complain to, or advise with; and, being hurt by her ingratitude, I suppose his conscience smote him upon the score of Maria, and therefore he naturally turned towards us for consolation.

After dinner, when we returned to the drawing-room, Lord Stanton took the old knight into his library. How he managed, I know not, but they joined us at tea, when he wore another kind of a countenance; his eyes had lost their redness, his wig was right on his head, and his features more composed. Maria, charmed at the alteration, rose

rose and took his hand. "My dear father!" said she, in a plaintive tone.

"Aye, my poor girl, I did not use thee well. I was a fool, at my age, to be so taken in, to give such a power of money for a fine lady, who has behaved so cruel and ungrateful. Well, well, Maria, it shall be the better for thee: I will make a new will directly. My lord, I will have your assistance, and you shall be guardian to my poor child, if you will be so good."

"With all my heart, (answered Stanton.) Though related to Lady Penrickard, I despise her for her ingratitude to you, and shall feel happy to render you or your daughter any service in my power."

This was settled: I believe I smiled, for it must be confessed that Lord Stanton is a very young man for a guardian to a miss of sixteen.

Sir Roger has written to his lady's father a curious letter of complaint, I dare say.—The story of Miss Babbington's marriage

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is this moment confirmed, with the addition that the gentleman is Lieutenant O'Clab who, being in want of a good estate, has been content to take possession of one, with the incumbrance of an old miss tacked to it. Who introduced him to her is not known; he has been in the neighbourhood but three weeks, and the secret of his rank was discovered through the folly of his servant, who got drunk for joy last night, and gloried in his master's cleverness in over-reaching the *old* lady. They set off for London this morning; perhaps she was undeceived, and ashamed to face her friends.

Poor Mrs. Stanton and her maid Martha are outrageous. *I* triumph in mortifying the former, by such a glaring proof that folly and indiscretion are not *solely* attached to youth and beauty. I had forgotten to tell you, that the miserable wretch Hardman continues raving mad, with not the smallest hope of any return to reason. Some near relations, literally poor, to whom
he

he never gave a shilling, have it seems applied to the chancellor about his fortune. The rubbish of his house having been removed, a vault has been discovered, after a strict search, in which was an iron chest, containing some thousand pounds, with securities for immense sums in the bank.—What a lesson to the miserly heart is this unhappy man ! whose very calamity is heard of without pity, his character universally despised ; who has lived without a friend, suffering every torture that avarice and continual apprehension could inflict, without enjoying his riches, assisting his relations, or having one good or generous action to reflect upon !

Three nieces and two nephews are his heirs. Their mother married unfortunately an opposite character to Hardman's, who spent her fortune, and left his family in great indigence, to whom this unnatural wretch never extended the least relief, but barred up his house and his heart, equally impenetrable against them, whilst thousands

laid useles in an iron chest. Who can pity such a man as this?

This is a strange heterogeneous letter, without order or connexion, for I write as things occur to my memory; it is sufficiently long however, and I will tax your patience no farther. I hope to-morrow our removal from this dull place will be decided on. I *will* have a *little pull* for Bath; but any city or town, where society is to be had, will be an eligible change for your poor, moping, but

Affectionate

C. M. STANTON.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

MISS BOYLE TO MRS. ROWE.

IT has often been a subject for debate, and never satisfactorily decided upon, Whether a feeling heart is, or is not, a blessing to its possessor? Mine has ever been but too susceptible : I have felt many pangs for myself and others in consequence of it ; yet I never once envied the tranquillity of another, never wished for more apathy to bear my own sorrows, or stoicism than might enable me to look with indifference on the woes of others.

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But,

But, my dear Mrs. Rowe, until yesterday I never knew the transport of communicating happiness,—of raising the suffering heart, that has languished without hope, struggling under the pressure of misfortunes, not only without complaint, but supporting a dignity of sorrow that has blunted the arrows of contempt from the prosperous proud, and has commanded respect, though in the vale of obscurity. O Mr. Cranfield! to you I am indebted for the happiest moment of my life. Generous, benevolent, man! blest be that noble spirit that led you to delegate me for the instrument of your beneficence! Sympathy and compassion may sometimes afford a temporary consolation to the wretched, but how painful must it be to a feeling heart, when listening to a detail of distresses and misfortunes beyond all power of relief! — Thank heaven, that painful sensation has not been mine!

Excuse me, my beloved friend, for thus delaying to gratify your curiosity. I will
repress

represents my self-congratulations, and endeavour to be methodical.

In my last letter, I told you Mr. Rofs had kindly promised to introduce me to two ladies. I was punctual to the hour, but found they were arrived before me.— On my entrance, he led me to the elder lady. “Mrs. Gordon, I have the pleasure to announce Miss Boyle, as desirous and deserving of being known to you.”

We both curtesied. “You are very kind, madam, (said she, in a sweet low tone,) to wish for an acquaintance that cannot possibly be productive of honour or pleasure to you.”

“If the introduction is attended by no unpleasant circumstances to you, madam, I am perfectly assured that I must be your debtor for both.”

She bowed to my little compliment, and then Miss Gordon advanced, and, with the most charming frankness, taking my hand,

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“I

"I feel already disposed to accept of your kindness without any apology, for I am sure you have a mind that will be gratified in giving pleasure, though you can expect no return."

I was delighted with this freedom.—

"You do me no more than justice, my dear madam: I am always happy when my services are accepted, and I am already convinced that I have great obligations to our good Mr. Rofs, in procuring me the honour of tendering them to Mrs. Gordon and yourself."

We then sat down, and entered into conversation on a variety of subjects, not very important, and of course not necessary to repeat; I shall therefore give you a description of the two ladies, as their persons struck me at the first view.

Mrs. Gordon appeared to be about five and forty, not tall, but genteel; a look of fashion, though clouded with sorrow; a pair of expressive eyes, that sometimes fixed

on

on vacancy with a heaviness that denoted deep thought. Her face *must have been* very handsome; *now* it was interesting, and looked as if affliction more than age had deprived it of former claims to admiration. Her address, and the little she did say, bore the marks of a polished and cultivated mind, and she evidently sought to disguise her feelings, and assume a placidity, a cheerfulness, that came not from the heart.

Miss Gordon is of the middle height, very thin and pale; delicate features, and a most brilliant pair of eyes, which, like her mother's, were occasionally dimmed by a pensive cast that stole over her face. Much sweetness and candour in her air and address, and a marked tenderness in her attention to her mother, that alone would have claimed esteem: but it was impossible to look on Miss Gordon without feeling an affection for her.

Such were the ladies I was introduced to. We passed some hours together most agree-

ably, and I am flattered with the idea that we felt reciprocal pleasure. I took an opportunity to express my wishes of being indulged with a more intimate acquaintance. " You do us honour, Miss Boyle, by the request ; but it is not fair the honour and pleasure should be all on one side ; and I fear that in no one circumstance can my daughter or myself contribute our share. — Our cottage is plain in the extreme, divested of all ornament, scarcely furnished with necessaries. Certain events in our lives have robbed us of every pretension to wit or entertainment ; depressed spirits, that barely rise to cheerfulness ; a reduced income, that but scantily affords the common wants of life : no dress, company, or amusement. How then, my dear madam, can I accept an offer, that, in happier days, must have been considered as an honour, and which now must be felt as an unreturnable obligation ? Poverty and misfortunes have left us little else than pride, an improper associate perhaps ; but human nature is fallible, and

and it is difficult to subdue sentiments that have been long accustomed to indulgence. Have the goodness therefore to consider it as our misfortune, not our inclination, if our meetings should be limited to our common friends."

I was affected by the ingenuousness of her answer, but not repulsed: I addressed myself with fervour to enforce my request of being permitted to wait on them; my heart, my eyes, warmly assisted my tongue,—and I conquered.

"You are irresistible, (she was pleased to say;) you are determined we shall be your debtors; and I see in the eyes of my Emma, that *her* heart has already anticipated your wishes. We shall certainly do ourselves the honour of attending you some morning very soon."

"My good madam, (said my father kindly,) honour and obligations are out of the question; the unfortunate naturally affiliate together. My daughter has been

E 6

long

long tried in the school of patience, and, though young, bears adversity without repining. Companions, such as I see before me, must be an acquisition to her that destroys every idea of favours being conferred by her."

This freedom of my father settled the point, without any more compliments, and the next day they promised to take their tea with us. Mr. Ross alone is favoured with their company to dinner. He has frequently presents of pigs, fowls, bacon, &c. from many of his substantial parishioners; and, on these occasions, he invites a particular friend or two to partake with him.

The following day they came, and a more unreserved communication rendered them still more pleasing. We were engaged on a very interesting question, when a letter was brought me from the post. "From my sister," said I, putting it into my pocket. Mrs. Gordon caught my hand: "Recol-

lest the terms we meet upon ; we must be friends or nothing : either retire, or read your letter here, unless you mean to drive us hence. I know the anxiety of waiting for letters, and that, if you pocket the little treasure, your mind will dwell upon it : oblige me therefore by perusing it."

I was delighted with her consideration, and availed myself of her permission to retire for a few minutes. I was absent much longer than I intended, and in the interval was very greatly discomposed. My sister mentioned the Earl's death, and her lord's design to return into the country, (doubtless a very proper compliment to the memory of his father ;) but Caroline's spirits are ill calculated for retirement, and the intention is not pleasing to her. In a postscript she informs me, that you had called, and left a card ; I thank you for the favour, and hope, if she should remain in town, that you will often see her.

Our

Our guests staid with us till a late hour, and engaged me to accompany Mr. Rofs the next day. I was punctual to the appointment, and, about a mile from our house, more detached from the town, and close to the river, we came to a white-washed cottage, three sides furrounded by a garden; the other had a green slope, that went down to the river, with a neat white paling before it. The entrance was through the garden, and opened into a small room by a glass door, rather an uncommon thing in Scotland. This room was perfectly neat, decorated with pots of flowers, and a few little drawings, framed only by bits of wood, neatly joined and painted. The furniture plain, but excessively clean, and the only luxury in it was a quantity of books, upon some painted shelves.

We were received with a politeness that gave consequence to the apartment; the simplicity of it was a contrast to the elegance and good-breeding of its possessors; both attracted

attracted admiration. They made not the smallest apology for the meanness of their habitation, as some less-informed minds would have done : they had prepared me to expect a cottage, for which they paid five pounds a year ; I was therefore agreeably surprised to find four very neat rooms, a poultry-court, and a good garden, well stocked with vegetables.

This visit so well established our regard for each other, that it produced a promise from Mrs. Gordon of writing down the principal events of her life from her memoirs and memory, in a few days, for my perusal.

The late circumstances, which had driven my father to Scotland, and at length to reside at Elgin, I very frankly communicated to them. The particulars of our family history, in which others were but too nearly concerned, I entirely omitted, as not necessary to relate. Two mornings after, I received the memoir which accompanies this letter ; and, through the kindness of

of Mr. Macniel, to whose care I send it, franks will be procured, as I must make two packets for safe conveyance.

Here then I break off. Peruse the memoir, and my next letter shall quickly follow. Adieu, my much-esteemed friend.

Your grateful

MARY BOYLE.

I have received a most kind and flattering letter from Miss Macintire. With such correspondents and such companions as I now enjoy, can I be otherwise than cheerful and contented?

The MEMOIR of Mrs. GORDON.

THE only child of a captain in the army, whose connexions were more respectable than opulent, I received every advantage that education and society could give, without

without the smallest prospect of any provision or independence at the death of my parents. We all know how inadequate the pay of an officer is to support his rank in the army, or any degree of respectability for his wife and family even in his life-time ; and how melancholy is the picture, which must unavoidably be placed before the eyes of a reflecting mind, when he contemplates these objects, so dear to him, hourly in danger, from the nature of his profession, of being left with a scanty provision, that can scarcely afford them bread !—Poor returns for a life devoted and sacrificed to his country !

At the age of eighteen I married Captain Gordon, with the approbation of my parents, who rejoiced to see me settled in their life-time, though their preferable choice would not have fallen upon an officer, from a conviction of the difficulties attending the situation ; but we were fond of each other, and they were too good to sever hearts that were united.

Within

Within the first year of my marriage, I lost both my parents,—the first affliction I had ever experienced, and a severe one it was, that required the tenderest attentions of my husband to moderate and alleviate my grief. In the course of three years, I had three children, two sons and a daughter. After the birth of the latter, my husband was abroad for near three years, and I suffered unspeakable anxiety in a country-retirement I had chosen in the West of England, where the only hours of comfort I knew were those devoted to my children.

Mr. Gordon's return was to me exquisite happiness; he was ordered into barracks, and for years we lived happy and respectable,—years of transport, for ever flown! a deceitful calm, that lulled us into a false security, pregnant with bitter storms, that were gathering at a distance to overwhelm us in a sea of misery.

In the first year after his return, I had another daughter. Four children to maintain

tain and educate was no small charge upon our moderate income; but we lived with economy, saw but little company, were ourselves the instructors of our children, and were all the world to each other.

When my eldest son was seventeen, his father procured for him a pair of colours, and intended his younger boy for the navy. He was shortly after received as a midshipman on board a guard-ship, at the sea-port nearest to our residence. My daughters I brought up with expectations, suitable to their situation; they knew they must depend upon their own talents for support, when deprived of their father, and therefore they were diligent and industrious.

My eldest son was little more than eighteen, my first girl seventeen, when Mr. Gordon received a letter from a brother settled in India, at Madras, with whom he had corresponded now and then, for Mr. William Gordon had not been punctual or quick in his replies. In this letter he earnestly

earnestly requested his brother would send over to him his eldest son and daughter : he had lately become a widower, had no children, and would adopt those two as his *own*, though he did not mean to forget the *others*.

This request, from a man who had never sent the most trifling present to any of the family, occasioned many conjectures and many consultations. We knew his fortune was very considerable : if we refused the invitation to our children, he might be offended, and in a fit of displeasure dispose otherwise of what he had acquired ; consequently we should greatly injure our family ; yet to part with them, where there seemed more than a chance that we should never meet again, was equally repugnant to our inclinations.

Several days past, and saw us still tortured with doubts and fears ; at length, we determined to abide by the choice of those most interested in the decision. My dear Edmund was sent for, and their uncle's letter

letter was laid before him and Isabella.—Young, and animated into rapture by the dazzling prospect, influenced by a duteous desire of lessening our expences, and securing their uncle's favour to the family, they hesitated not a moment, but with one voice declared their readiness to accept of an offer so apparently advantageous to all.

But an obstacle of some magnitude checked the ardour of their wishes. By what means could a sum be raised sufficient to equip them for the voyage, and for an appearance from which they might derive some consequence? We knew too well the illiberal prejudices of mankind, whose respect and regard is too generally attracted by dress and superfluous trifles, not to feel the necessity of attending to these circumstances. Edmund would of course dispose of his commission; but three hundred pounds would be insufficient to pay their passage, and provide them with genteel habiliments. At length, a plan was adopted that

that my heart, at the first mention of, revolted against ; but, as I was the most interested to object against it, I silently acquiesced in what I could not approve.

Mr. Gordon had a company in an old regiment then upon the establishment ; he made an exchange with an officer for one on half-pay, and received a hundred and fifty pounds : this sum, with the sale of Edmund's commission, answered every purpose of accommodation. A thousand painful ideas took possession of my mind ; my children were going on a hazardous voyage, and with uncertain prospects, — dependent on the capricious temper of a man, who, but in this only instance, had been ever entirely regardless of their interests ; and surely he ought, if of a liberal disposition, to have remitted money for their expences, well knowing the narrow bounds of his brother's income. The immense distance between us afforded but little probability that I should ever embrace them more, and
a sad

a sad presentiment laid fast hold of my heart, that, when we parted, it would be for ever !

Minds of sensibility may conceive what we all felt when the hour for separation arrived : it is a scene that cannot be described, nor can I dwell on the idea.—How many tedious lingering months rolled on before we could hope to hear from them ; and, when the time came, when we received a letter, the hand-writing of which we knew to be our Edmund's, joy and transport threw us into agitations that for some moments suspended a knowledge of its contents ; at length the seal was broken ; we hardly breathed from excess of pleasure ; judge then what we must have suffered from a cruel reverse, when this letter, so long, so ardently, wished for, informed us, “ That, when they reached Madras, they received the mortifying intelligence of their uncle's death, three weeks previous to their arrival ; and, to complete their distress and disappointment,

pointment, they heard also that he had, about eight months before his death, married a young woman, to whom he had left all his fortune, except a trifle to a nephew and niece, conditionally, if they arrived in India within twelve months after his death."

A blow so dreadful, so unexpected, almost deprived them of reason. Strangers, with very little money, and no recommendations, what was to become of them?—The captain, who had brought them over, most humanely took them to a friend's house, and made inquiries for the executors to their uncle's will; also sent an account of their arrival to the widow. From the latter they had only a cold compliment, that she was going from Madras, and was sorry she could not be useful to them; but that Mr. Brent, the acting executor, would settle every thing with them respecting their legacies.

To Mr. Brent they were introduced. He received them with kindness, lamented that
the

the death of Mr. Gordon took place before their arrival, and that the sum left them was so trifling, as to be scarcely worth their acceptance, — five hundred pounds each. This small bequest would do little more than support them there, till they could obtain a passage home, and pay for it.

From the captain and Mr. Brent they received uncommon civilities ; a niece of the latter shewed great partiality to Edmund, and one day Mr. Brent advised him to stay in India ; that he could procure for him a lieutenancy in the Company's service ; and, in short, on those conditions would give him his niece. The offer was too tempting to be refused, as he dreaded nothing so much as returning to England to overwhelm his family by disappointment ; he therefore thankfully accepted of the proposition, received his commission, and married the lady a week before this letter was written. His part of the legacy he had made over to his sister, who was to re-

side with him and his wife, until an opportunity offered for her return with proper persons, or that she might be advantageously settled. He added, that Mr. Brent had given him a well furnished house and some slaves, and promised him considerable assistances from time to time, with a good fortune at his death."

Such were the contents of my dear son's letter. Another, inclosed by Isabella, repeated much the same; both were written with caution and tenderness, to soften our disappointments, and hold out hopes of better prospects hereafter.

When we had gone through the letters, we looked at each other in silent anguish. Our dear Edmund was now lost to us, and his beloved sister, depending upon him for support, as the trifle she could call her own would barely afford her clothes, she must then either live on the bounty of a sister-in-law, run the chance of returning with strangers, the dangers of another long voyage, or

or marry there the first tolerable offer she might receive.

Oh ! how bitterly did we regret past occurrences ! but it availed little to regret where there remained no possibility of retrieving what we had lost ; we fought to deceive and comfort each other with flattering hopes, that the next accounts would prove more pleasing and satisfactory ; but the heart-felt anguish we felt from doubt, fear, and suspense, was too visible for our efforts to succeed in carrying on the deceit. Another affliction also fixed on the mind of Mr. Gordon. In the hope that his brother's fortune might, through Edmund, have made some provision for his wife and children, he had sold out on half-pay, partly on account of his ill-health, and to furnish means for their voyage to India. Now deprived of that hope, his complaints daily getting ground, he saw no prospects for me and his daughter but poverty and distress. Our younger son was still a midshipman, and his scanty pay was a bare subsistence.

Reflections of this kind preyed deeply upon his peace, and brought on a settled decline, in an asthmatic consumption. I procured every medical aid, but obtained no consolation. "He might linger a year or two, in a painful existence," was the dreadful sentence, the uncertain termination of which kept me in constant alarms. I saw that misfortune pointed her arrows at my head, but knew not that the whole quiver would be exhausted of its darts, to wound a poor defenceless being, unable to shield herself against them.

Near seven months had elapsed since we heard from our children : daily expectation and anxiety had almost worn us to skeletons. At length, the arrival of a packet caused a thousand tumultuous hopes and fears. Several days were past, the letters were delivered out, but we had *none*.—When no longer flattered with hope, when expectation ceased, think what must have been our dreadful conjectures ; — dreadful indeed!

indeed ! But they were soon to be realized to their utmost extent.

I was one morning silently weeping by the side of my dear husband, whose increased weakness, from the anxiety of his mind, had confined him for the last two days to his bed, when Emma came to take my place, saying that Mr. Waller, the clergyman of the village we resided in, wished to see me. A cold shivering seized my heart, and for several moments my trembling limbs refused to support me. With difficulty I crept down stairs, unable to account for my disorder, or what I had to expect from Mr. Waller's visit.

His first opening was an inquiry after Mr. Gordon's health ; and, finding that I was prepared to expect the worst consequences from the state he then laid in, he naturally fell into a discourse suitable to his profession, inculcating fortitude under unavoidable misfortunes, and submission,

without repining, at the dispensations of Providence.

I told him, that I was but a weak and feeble subject to support the calamities I had hourly to dread, but that I trusted heaven would enable me to struggle through them, of whatever nature they might be, with composure and resignation.

He praised my good sense and acquiescence to the Divine will; and then, taking my hand, "My good Mrs. Gordon, heaven often sends afflictions to the worthy and upright, to prove their virtue in the hour of trial, and hold up to the world an example for imitation. I grieve to think that you are destined to be that *pattern*; that your fortitude must be put to the proof, that sorrows must wound your heart, and that the man who reveres you has a painful task upon him he cannot evade; but I trust you will bear up nobly under the stroke, that most deeply wounds a feeling heart."

"Do

“Do not torture me with further preface, (I cried ;) you have something dreadful to reveal :—fay at once my children are dead ; I can have nothing worse to fear.”

“ Heaven, (said he, in a solemn tone,) heaven has been pleased to recall them, from a world abounding with calamities, to partake of eternal felicity in the realms above.”

I scarcely heard the last words distinctly, before a sickness at my heart, and a swimming in my head, took from me all recollection, till I found myself supported by the maid-servant, Mr. Waller holding salts, and bathing my temples with water. He had most considerately avoided to give any alarm above stairs ; and the moment he saw my senses returning, “ My dear Mrs. Gordon, *now* you are called upon for fortitude and resignation ; you have yet left objects equally dear and interesting ;—one, whose life might pay the forfeit of any indiscreet discovery by unavailing grief ; for *his* sake,

for your Emma's peace, *now*, in the hour of trial, give proofs of that noble and humble submission to inevitable evils, which, however torturing to your heart, has placed the darlings you lament beyond a possibility of suffering like you, — has procured for them uninterrupted happiness for ever!"

I heard him with gratitude and attention; but, alas! who, in the heavy hour of affliction, can controul the painful feelings of the soul, can repress the sorrows of the sighing heart, or teach "the stoics lesson" to the trembling wretch, whose dearest limbs are severed from his side, leaving a useless trunk behind, wounded and maimed for ever!

To enlarge upon this subject is unnecessary. I remained more than an hour with the good man, unable to appear before Mr. Gordon, in my present state of agitation; and in that time was informed that he had received a letter from a captain of an India ship, just arrived in England, requesting
he

he would take upon him to announce to Mr. Gordon the death of his son and daughter, the latter surviving her brother only three months. The gentleman added, that, in a few days, he purposed waiting on us in person, to deliver a few trifles he had the care of.

In the precarious state of my husband's health, I was sensible that a knowledge of the intelligence I had received would inevitably put a period to his life; and what a task was mine, to stifle the insupportable grief which oppressed me, and meet his scrutinizing eye with seeming composure! When I entered his apartment, I pretended for some moments to be looking in a drawer, that I might recover some degree of tranquillity. Most happily he was dozing; I saw Emma looked at me with surprise and curiosity: I made a motion with my hand for her to withdraw, and she obeyed.

Heaven assisted my feeble powers in that sur of inexpressible anguish, and the

dread of alarming my husband, enabled me to struggle with my grief, to suppress my tears, and speak without agitation, when he waked and addressed me. The paleness of my countenance excited his attention and tenderness; he lamented the effect of his illness, and my anxiety: I turned the subject, and eluded further observation.

The following day a very unexpected change took place. An abscess, which had been forming on the lungs, suddenly burst, when the physician was fortunately present. He apprehended immediate suffocation, but the discharge was less violent than he expected; and, in about three hours, Mr. Gordon was so much relieved, that the doctor gave hopes of a possibility that he might recover. Recover he did most rapidly for a time, but the disorder soon returned.

In less than a week, he was down stairs, apparently much better, and the physician advised his immediate removal ~~at 10 o'clock~~—

Alas!

Alas ! his illness had so exhausted our finances, that he was already in debt to his agent, and we were utterly at a loss how to procure money necessary to take him there ; indeed, knowing the state of our affairs, he refused to go : I was nearly distracted at the difficulties that impeded it, and wrote to the agent, offering him such terms as I thought he could not refuse, if he would advance twenty or thirty pounds on the present occasion.

In the mean time, I had held several consultations with the good Mr. Waller, on the heart-breaking subject of my children's death, uncertain whether I ought to have the mournful intelligence communicated to Mr. Gordon, from an apprehension that the gentleman would arrive when it would be no longer in my power to conceal it, and the sudden disclosure might have fatal effects. Another motive urged the communication ; that grief, which I had pent up in my own bosom, by pressing upon

my mind, had precluded rest, and destroyed my appetite; consequently I had become pale, emaciated, and exceedingly feeble.—My dear husband was extremely alarmed at the alteration, and accused himself incessantly as the cause of it, from the fatigue I had undergone during his illness.

One evening he and Emma were playing backgammon, in a small room adjoining the garden. I was sitting pensively ruminating on my misfortunes, in the front parlour, when Mr. Waller was announced. He was the only visitor we received, and his presence gave me a kind of mournful satisfaction, because to him I could unlock the secrets of my bosom.

“ My dear Mrs. Gordon, (said he,) I am happy to find you alone. Summon resolution to your aid, for Mr. Edwards, the India captain, is at my house, and is desirous of waiting upon you.”

Though I had daily expected his arrival, yet I felt sick at heart when informed that

he was come, and dreaded seeing him worse than death. To delay his melancholy visit was impossible, and it would be a fruitless attempt to endeavour at a further concealment from Mr. Gordon. As we could not go to Bristol, nor any where in public, without the hazard of meeting some person, who, returning from India, was acquainted with our misfortune.

After some consultation, I submitted to Mr. Waller's advice, which was, that he should bring the captain, and together gradually disclose his mournful errand, when I was absent from the room. Unable to move from the trembling of my limbs, I saw the two gentlemen arrive, and ushered into the back parlour, without the power of going one step, or speaking a word.

Almost breathless with terror, I sat listening, in fearful expectation of the effects that might follow intelligence so fraught with misery.

In

In a short time, Emma opened the door, and perceived me in a state little short of total insensibility. She flew to me, and, throwing her arms round me, "Mother, my dear mother, compose yourself!" A violent gush of tears relieved her, and recovered me. I could just articulate the word "father!"

"He bears it nobly, (answered she ;) *your* example, *your* wonderful fortitude, my dearest mother, inspires us with emulation."

At this moment Mr. Waller entered the room, and, taking my hand, "Let me conduct you to Mr. Gordon. His admiration of your courage and resolution has taught him to bear his misfortune becoming a Christian."

I could not speak, but permitted him to lead me to my husband, when a scene ensued that beggars all description. Fortitude and heroism funk under the conflict, and that night was a night of such heart-breaking,

breaking woe, as only parents can conceive !

I will no longer dwell on this subject.— Many days passed before we could see each other with any degree of composure, and I saw Mr. Gordon again sinking under the sorrows he vainly tried to subdue. Captain Edwards delivered to us two watches and two diamond rings, that had been my dear lamented Isabella's ; and here I must relate the melancholy circumstances that attended my unfortunate children.

My son's letter mentioned his marriage and happy prospects from the generosity of Mr. Brent. His sister resided with him, and for near three months, they lived in much harmony. The East Indians live in great splendour, and are very hospitable ; my son, as an officer, saw a good deal of company. Among others, a Captain Morgan, a man of large fortune, was introduced to him, who had arrived at Madras subsequent to his marriage.

Upright

Upright and unsuspicious himself, Edmund never observed the least impropriety in the conduct of his wife, and was blind to an improper intimacy, visible to every one but the deluded husband, between Morgan and Mrs. Gordon. Judge then what must have been his feelings, when informed one evening, on his return from a dinner-party, that Capt. Morgan and Mrs. Gordon had left the house soon after he had quitted it, and one of the servants had acquainted Isabella that it was in consequence of her detecting them together. They attempted to bribe the servant, but she, faithful to her master, refused their presents, and protested she would make the discovery.

The injured husband, in the frenzy of the moment, unhappily flew out of the house, determined to pursue them, and it is conjectured must have obtained information of the road they had taken ; for the following day, about noon, he overtook them at a small village. He was accompanied by one servant ; Morgan had no more. Without upbraiding

upbraiding his wife, he instantly challenged her seducer. The challenge was accepted; they fired their pistols, and my dear and ever-lamented son was shot dead on the spot.

The guilty unhappy wife, stung by instant remorse, fell into fits, in which she laid many hours, and, when recovered, was in a state of frightful insanity. The inhospitable ungrateful Morgan appeared to be overcome by terror and repentance. She could not be removed, therefore he gave his purse to the servant who had attended my poor Edward, and, with many expressions of bitter regret and self-reproach, he pursued his route, and was never heard of after.

The servant dispatched messengers to Mr. Brent and to Isabella: the latter was taken extremely ill. Mr. Brent ordered every assistance for her, and then set off for this scene of death and distraction. Doubtless he must have suffered much, but the wretched cause of all this misery was
insensible

insensible to every thing and every idea, but the shocking one that had caused her distraction : she raved incessantly on blood and murder. They had some difficulty to convey her back to Madras, where she was placed under proper hands, and, when Capt. Edwards left the country, continued in the same miserable and hopeless state.

The dear unhappy Isabella, deprived of a brother so dear, her only protector ; among strangers, friendless, and unprotected ; suffering also for her parents, whose tenderness and uncomfortable situation could ill support the loss of a son so dear, and the disappointment of their best hopes ; all these aggravations, added to the shock of such a dreadful calamity, overpowered a delicate constitution, and brought her to the brink of the grave.

At this time a commander of an India ship, about to return to Europe, who had often seen and admired Isabella, touched by the recital of her uncommon misfortunes,

tunes, felt deeply interested in her recovery. His exertions and Mr. Brent's humane attentions preserved her life at that time, and she recovered from the violence of her disorder. Time pressed upon the captain; he was ready for failing, yet could not be prevailed upon to leave this unfortunate young woman, who had so many claims upon humanity; yet her weak state, and the recent catastrophe, precluded an immediate application for her hand.

In this dilemma, he applied to Mr. Brent, and that gentleman undertook to plead for him, though he had been so unfortunate in the union he had lately promoted, and was then extremely miserable on account of his niece. He had good sense and compassion enough to discriminate, and attach no blame either to the unhappy victim of his wife's irregularities, or his innocent sister, whose forlorn state had engaged his tenderest cares in the midst of his own troubles.

Mr.

Mr. Brent then held several conferences with Isabella, and at length the dear confederate creature made this reply,—words which, repeated to me by Capt. Edwards, will ever be engraven on my heart.

“My dear sir, I do not think I have long to remain in this world. The anxiety that has for months oppressed my mind, for the disappointments attending my dear parents;—this last never-to-be-forgotten misfortune, which must bear so hard upon them, altogether have fixed a dart in my bosom, and given an incurable wound;—yet gratitude to the generous man, who wishes to attach himself to an unhappy friendless being,—the bare possibility (small indeed is the probability) that I may again see the authors of my life, and that, as the wife of a noble beneficent man, I may bestow comfort, and give another son deserving of their love;—these considerations overcome all my objections, do away the repugnancy which ill health and delicacy have given rise to; and, if, under all the painful circumstances that

that hang over me, your generous friend wishes for my hand, it is his. May I live to *reward* his kindness! If *I do not*, affection and gratitude will glow in my heart to the last hour of my existence."

Such was the reply of my dearly beloved child.—The captain was in transports,—the marriage soon completed, and, in five days after, they quitted Madras with prosperous gales. Whether Isabella had exerted herself beyond her strength, or whether the sickness with which she was afflicted increased her disorder, is not certainly known; but, within ten days after they were on their voyage, she evidently grew weaker every hour, and expired exactly the day month on which she was married, with her last breath imploring blessings on her husband and parents, and beseeching the former to be a son and comforter to those unhappy relatives who had so much anguish preparing for them.

Her

Her death occasioned the bitterest grief, and the most profound melancholy to her husband : he devoted his days to regret and sorrow. Capt. Edwards, who was the first mate, and his particular friend, sought to rouse him from the stupor that hung over him, by reminding him of his duty, and the consequences that might attend a neglect of it.

“ Well, (said he, one day to him,) I believe I am wrong ; I disobey the angel I have lost ; *I have* duties to perform.—I will be the son of her parents, and she will rejoice in heaven. At all events, Edwards, to-morrow I will make my will ; mean time, remove from my sight these objects, which I cannot look upon without horror. They were the property of my wife, and must be restored to her parents.”

The things alluded to were two watches, one of which had been presented to my child by her brother ; the other had been his, and was returned to her by Mr. Brent, with

with two diamond-rings, given by that gentleman to the brother and sister, on the marriage of the former. These trinkets, with her chest of clothes, he requested Edwards would take care of, and remove from his cabin.

That night they were overtaken by a violent storm, and for two days and nights were in imminent danger. The tempest had begun to subside a little, when a leak was discovered in the ship that called forth still greater apprehensions than the raging of the winds and waves. Every possible exertion was made to repair the damage, and signals of distress thrown out to another ship then in sight; but vain was every effort to stop the leak, or keep the water under by the pumps. The men, exhausted by the violence of the storm, and equally fatigued and dispirited by their fruitless exertions, gave up the ship as lost, and all eagerly threw out the boats, in the hope of being taken up by the other ship, then bearing towards them.

The captain saw no possibility of preserving the vessel, which filled fast; yet no entreaties could prevail upon him to quit it. They had thrown all their heavy lading over board, and great part of the crew had taken to the boats. The captain, Edwards, and about ten men, remained still lingering, and trying their utmost efforts, from which however they derived no hope; when a sudden shifting of the wind enabled them to work their pumps, and the boatswain's mate cried out they had succeeded, and stopped the leak. In that critical moment, when joy was expressed by a general shout, the quick turning of the sail, by an untoward accident, knocked the captain overboard; a wave rolled over, concealed him from their sight, and he rose no more!

The momentary transport received a severe check, for he was universally beloved. Edwards, though oppressed with grief, took the command, and by his attention and diligence, the ship was kept from sinking.—

The

The other vessel crouded sail to their assistance, and in a short time their apprehensions abated : they were not far from St. Helena, and trusted they should be able to work her in safety to that port.

Their hopes were realized, the ship was repaired, and Capt. Edwards appointed to the command of her. During the dreadful situation described, the sailors, who, though they are in general the most generous and humane people on the face of the globe, are yet equally superstitious and unperfuadable in certain points, took it into their heads that a dead body kept on board occasioned all their calamities ; therefore, in spite of every remonstrance, the captain's commands or entreaties, the body of my dear unfortunate Isabella, with the chests belonging to her, were committed to the bosom of the deep ocean, and her parents, deprived of that last sad comfort of following her to a peaceful grave !—Here let me pause, and ruminate on past afflictions.

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The

The generous purpose of the worthy captain, who had told Edwards that he designed to make his will in favour of his wife's family, had been interrupted by the unexpected commencement of the storm, and the fatal accident which deprived him of life was sudden and conclusive.

When Capt. Edwards arrived in England, his first care was to inquire for our family, and most considerately he addressed his letter to the clergyman of the village, as the properest person to communicate tidings so full of woe. The manner of my dear children's death was explained by himself when he brought the watches and rings. He had previously addressed the late captain's relations, assuring them that his will would have been in our favour, and suggested the propriety of a handsome compliment, due to us as the parents of a much-beloved wife. But his generous hints were not attended to, nor did we ever hear from them.

This

This melancholy relation, delivered by Capt. Edwards, Mr. Waller would have persuaded him to suppress, from a conviction that the circumstances would tend greatly to distress us, beyond what we might feel in believing my son had died a natural death; but the captain observed, that the affair was known to so many now in England, that it would be a miracle if we escaped the information, and that perhaps suddenly delivered, or at an unreasonable time. How far he was right I do not pretend to say, but I am well convinced from that hour Mr. Gordon received his death-wound, as the climax of his miseries.

To Bristol, however, I was determined to remove, yet with a forlorn hope, and an agonized mind. I had received the money necessary from the agent on the terms I proposed, though both prayers and tears were employed for two days, before I could persuade my dear husband to join in mea-

tures absolutely necessary ; but he saw no alternative, and knew his death must involve us in wretchedness.

We had been at Bristol near a week, with little or no alteration in Mr. Gordon's health, when, one morning, we were unexpectedly and pleasingly surprised by the sight of our now only remaining son, whose ship, arriving at Plymouth, he had obtained leave from his captain to visit us. Poor Henry, till then a stranger to our misfortunes, mingled his tears with ours, and lamented his inability to assist in our pecuniary difficulties. He had yet two years to serve before he could expect promotion : his small pittance barely supplied necessities, and, when his ship was laid up, it was a mere chance if he could obtain another ; his prospects therefore were little less gloomy than our's ; but each fought to cheer the other, though each was sensible of the deception.

One morning, when we were at the wells, Mr. Gordon so feeble, that he was supported by his son and daughter, he was recognized by Colonel Chewton, who advanced, and, saluting him kindly, regretted his apparent ill-health ; my husband rejoiced to see him, and, after some conversation, he accompanied us home, and we left them together.

The colonel stayed near three hours, and, when we returned to the room, we found him almost as great a sufferer by joy as he had been by sorrow, and it was some time before his agitations would permit him to speak. The colonel had inquired minutely into his situation ; and feeling, he said, for Henry's uncomfortable, because distant, prospects, had offered to exert himself to obtain his discharge from the navy, and he would present him with a pair of colours in his own regiment, and also take upon him the care of his farther promotion.

This offer, which he well knew, would prove agreeable to Henry's wishes, always more in favour of a military than naval line, though necessity had obliged us to adopt it; this offer, Mr. Gordon most gratefully accepted. Henry was overjoyed, and I felt pleasure in the gratification of their wishes. The completion of this plan was not long in terminating: the colonel had interest to do what he pleased, and Henry was suffered to stay with us for a month, the longest period we could suppose the low state of our finances would permit us to remain in Bristol.

It was with an aching heart I saw not the least ground gained by our journey. Mr. Gordon's complaints were beyond relief; the sorrow, which had taken deep root in his bosom, received only a temporary suspension from the kindness of Colonel Chewton, and was quickly followed by a melancholy despondency, that made me apprehensive of the most fatal effects. Just then

then a promotion took place in the army, in which the colonel was included, and had the command of another regiment.

This was a painful stroke to Henry, and soon followed by a second still worse. The colonel was obliged to set off for London, to kiss hands at court, and was appointed to the command of one of our garrisons abroad, with an order not to delay his embarkation, the troops being already on board the transports, and those destined to be relieved very impatient to return after a long absence from their native country.— Thus were we deprived of a generous friend, and my Henry of a protector, in a corps where he was an absolute stranger, without any recommendation.

From this hour of fresh disappointment, Mr. Gordon evidently grew worse, and so ill, as to render a journey home utterly impracticable. Henry had written to his benefactor, and offered to attend him abroad: to this letter he received no answer, and

as we had no positive direction, but addressed it to the agent for the regiment, it is more than possible he never got it, and might have left town previous to its arrival, for we understood his time was very limited, and consequently much engaged.

Sixteen days after this event, I lost the best of husbands, whose rapid decline for the last week cut off every particle of hope, and whose drooping spirits I sought to relieve and support by an appearance of calm resignation, that had no hold of my mind. What he felt, and the conversations between us, I cannot repeat, for to this hour the recollection is daggers to my heart ; yet I was not selfish enough to regret his release from a life of disappointments and misery. I thanked heaven for translating him to a blessed immortality, where his virtues were rewarded, and his sufferings were no more.

A respectable man, a good husband, a tender father, a sincere friend, who had lived with integrity, and died with the consolation

consolation that he had never intentionally injured a human being,—where is the boasted hero of antiquity, that has equal claims to fame and immortality with the truly good man, thus sinking gently to his grave, unblazoned by the pride of ancestry, or by the brazen trumpet of war, where the hero gains a name by destroying his fellow-creatures, and extending desolation and misery to the fatherless and widow.

Heaven be praised, *my* husband had known but little service, and may my darling son, when bravely fighting in defence of his country, reverence the laws of humanity, and consider such, as the wretched politics of mankind deem our natural enemies, with consideration and kindness, as links of *one* great chain that extends far beyond our comprehension!

But to return: The death and consequent expences attending the burial of my dear husband, not only exhausted the remainder of the small sum I had obtained,

G 5

but

but even involved me in fresh pecuniary difficulties, from which I had no other way of extricating myself but by disposing of every thing of value that our ill fortune had left us.

Scarcely had we recovered from this severe blow, and were consulting in what manner to dispose of ourselves, my whole income not exceeding thirty pounds a year, without relations or friends who could or would assist us, when I received a letter from the agent, demanding the payment of the sums he had advanced to me. Though I had reason to expect this claim, I was not prepared to answer it. Delusive hope had suggested the probability of Mr. Gordon's recovery, when he might have sacrificed part of his pay to reimburse the agent: alas! I considered the present possibility without looking forward to the too certain consequences, which now fell with additional weight upon an enfeebled mind, born down with inexpressible anguish.

I sunk

I sunk under it, and for many days expected a termination of my sorrows; but heaven, in its mercy, spared me to the prayers of my children. During my illness, poor Henry wrote to the agent, and made himself amenable for the debt, by joining in the security, and allowing part of his pay to liquidate it. On my recovery, being informed of the steps he had taken, I was excessively distressed; for what difficulties must he not struggle with, in resigning a part of his very small income! but the dear youth considered only my peace, and his sister's forlorn condition.

While we were deliberating where we should hide ourselves from the world, Henry received orders to join his regiment, which was to be stationed in Scotland: that order instantly determined us, and we resolved to follow him. He left us at a small village near Bristol, and repaired to his regiment, another shock to our dejected hearts! From thence he wrote to me that he was going

to Edinburgh ; and, having had some conversation with an old Scotch officer in the regiment, he ventured to recommend Elgin as a very desirable residence, and advised our taking a passage to Dundee, from whence to Elgin the expence of travelling would be trifling. The officer also suggested an application to the worthy minister, Mr. Rofs, with liberty to make use of his name, being known to him formerly in Edinburgh.

We most gladly availed ourselves of this flight, though kind, recommendation ; and without dwelling on trifling inconveniencies, we arrived in safety at Elgin, where necessity subdued the repugnance natural to a stranger introducing herself, and compelled me to intrude on Mr. Rofs with so little advantage to myself, and still less claims to his attention, that, when I presented myself, the agitations of my mind occasioned a violent gush of tears before I could articulate a word. This was sufficient to interest one of the most humane hearts in the world,

world, and, in less than an hour, his kindness removed an oppressive weight from my mind, and inspired a glimmering of comfort long, very long, a stranger to my bosom.

A fortnight we remained in his house, and then, by his indefatigable exertions, we were settled in our present little cottage, where we have resided five years, during which time my son has been in several places, and has only visited us twice. We hear constantly from him : he has liquidated our debt, but has been obliged to be in arrears with his agent, though he lives with the most rigid economy,—such indeed as to draw upon himself the sneers of his brother-officers, who attribute to meanness and parsimony that frugality which enables him often to send little trifles to us, that pain us to receive, but which we cannot prevent.

He is still an ensign, and must despair of promotion, as he has no money to purchase

chase a lieutenancy, and his friend, Colonel Chewton, has a government in the West Indies, consequently can render him no service.

Thus we struggle through life, with the remembrance of the most painful calamities rankling in our bosoms, the anxiety and sorrow we feel for our poor Henry's hopeless situation, and I have the superior anguish of knowing that my health is declining, and that my unfortunate Emma will be left a wretched orphan, without friends or fortune, exposed to want in a merciless world, or an incumbrance upon a brother who has already denied himself the necessaries of life to assist me and his beloved sister.

Our time is generally employed in spinning, which adds a little to our income, and amuses our minds. The only moments that afford us a temporary comfort are those spent with our good Mr. Ross. In five years

years we have admitted no other person in our house, and are as little known in the town, as if we lived fifty miles from it.

Thus, madam, I have briefly related my unhappy story: and, though the recital must be tedious to you, I have passed over many scenes of misery, many painful reflections that obtrude on my mind, and which have settled that dejection on my countenance you have so tenderly remarked,—a dejection proceeding from despair, without one cheering ray in the chapter of possibilities that can drive it from my heart.

THE END OF THE MEMOIR.

MISS

MISS BOYLE in Continuation.

SUCH my dear Mrs. Rowe are the uncommon misfortunes of the worthy Mrs. Gordon and her family; and, when I contemplate the variety of sorrows she has felt, I blush at my own weakness and imbecility of mind, that has suffered the loss of fortune,—how comparatively light to her woes! to give me so many days and nights of painful inquietude, when we have double her income, and that income secured to me.

I assure you, my good friend, I never was so little in my own estimation as now, for I find the fortitude I prided myself on has had but few calls since the death of my mother, and the evils I complained of were more imaginary than real. It is thus we often deceive ourselves, by substituting fictitious for real virtues. After this acknowledgment, I hope you will not think me

me ostentatious, if I let you into a secret known only to my father ; and, I cannot appear so in your eyes, since you know I am only the instrument to convey the bounty of another to the deserving and unfortunate.

When I had read the memoir of Mrs. Gordon, a thought immediately suggested itself, which I lost no time in communicating to my father, and he as readily approved of it. This was to write directly to my brother's trustee, to inquire for the purchase of a lieutenancy. The difference of money, necessary on the sale of an ensign's commission, we had from Mrs. Gordon ; we therefore requested our friend, if he heard of the desired purchase, to write on the instant to Mr. Gordon, with information that a friend unknown had procured the rank of a lieutenancy for him, and would lay down the money for the difference, also clear his account with the agent ; and, for this small act of friendship, he

he was indebted to the excellency of his own character, and his consideration for a respectable mother and an amiable sister.

You know not the transport that I feel on this delightful opportunity of communicating happiness to a worthy depressed heart. They cannot entertain the least suspicion that we are concerned in the business, for I made no secret to them of our reduced circumstances, and circumscribed income, but on the subject of Mr. Cranfield's money I was entirely silent.

I think, my dear Mrs. Rowe, that I cannot better answer the generous intention of the donor than by relieving persons in Mrs. Gordon's situation. It is the well-born and respectable persons, reduced by a variety of misfortunes, neither to be foreseen nor guarded against, — who strive to support a character in life by the greatest self-denials, and shrink from the insolence of prosperity to privacy and retirement,

ment, preserving their integrity and ennobled by their industry and resignation,—it is such that have claims upon the liberal and beneficent heart.

To persons of this description, a comparative small sum may be sufficient to procure happiness, whilst hundreds, bestowed on the unblushing suppliant, would be idly lavished, unthankfully wasted, because they are not ashamed to make frequent demands on the hands of generosity, and have minds fitted to their condition.

You cannot conceive the impatience I feel for the conclusion of this affair. It has given me uncommon spirits, and endeared them greatly to my heart. This evening Miss Gordon and myself are going to the Mount, to ramble among the ruins of the castle, leaving the gentlemen to entertain her mother. Both ladies gratefully say they have enjoyed more tranquillity since our acquaintance commenced, than they

they have experienced for years; and to them I am greatly indebted for my father's more cheerful spirits, which must ever include and promote mine.

Adieu, my amiable friend. I shall not fail to write immediately, when we hear from London, as I am sure you will be interested for this worthy family. This letter was not intended to accompany my former one; but, a delay occurring in sending off the packet, I dispatch the whole together. Ever,

Dear Mrs. Rowe,

Your obliged friend,

MARY BOYLE.

LETTER

LETTER X.

THE COUNTESS OF STANTON TO MISS

BOYLE.

HEAVEN defend me, what a letter !*

Why, child, you are raving !—pur-
ling streams, shady groves, and croaking
rooks, have absolutely given *you* the hor-
rors, and inspired you with all the malice
and venom of an old maid, with the fer-
monizing gravity of a country curate. You
have caught the enthusiasm of the old Scots
feers, pretend to second fight, and foretel
such innumerable evils, ready to fall on my
devoted

* This letter does not appear.

devoted head, that one would believe Pandora's box was to be opened by me alone.

Indeed, indeed, Mary, had I not been in the most delightful harmony of spirits when your letter arrived, I should certainly have flown to the weeping willow, and ruined the credit of all your prognostics at once, which would have been an irreparable disgrace to your foretelling system, and second sight. But your kind stars, or my good genius, had most fortunately been at work to counteract the poison that might have produced such doleful effects.

Two hours before your *animating* epistle came to hand, I had succeeded in my *little pull* for a journey to Bath, and was in the very act of chanting songs of triumph, when the prophecies of Mary Boyle were delivered. Happily I am so sweetly disposed at present, that it is impossible even your letter can put me out of humour; and, as a proof of my graciousness, I have destroyed

destroyed the ill-natured monitor, and shall write as if I had never seen it.

I told you in my last, that I intended to be very condescending to my lord; and I played my cards with such dexterity, sweetly smiling on him, and affecting an indifference whether we remained in the country or not, that I threw him into raptures. He declared I was all the world to him, and that the country would be his preferable choice, if his Caroline and Almeria were reconciled to stay a few months at Stanton Place, without injury to their health and spirits.

“Your servant, my lord, (thought I;) that scheme won’t do;” and I began to fear I had gone too far, when luckily Almeria passed before the library-window, in the garden, looking as pale and woe-be-gone as any forlorn maiden need to do.

“Your dear sister really appears very ill, something must be thought of to change the

the current of her ideas, or her feelings will destroy her.

"She is, indeed, (said he,) much changed, (alarmed, as I wished him to be,) and I thank you, my dear Caroline, for the observation. Yes, it is necessary we should leave this house for a time:—we will go to Scarborough."

"Where you please, my lord," was my civil reply, which produced a rapturous kiss on my hand and a very pretty compliment.

I had now another card to play, so away I posted to aunt Nell, complained of being sick-faint, and some how very oddish. The bait took. "Bless me! (said she,) I protest, Lady Stanton, I believe you are in a family-way. What joy will that be to my nephew! — You must take great care of yourself."

"My lord talks of going to Scarborough, (returned I;) and indeed Lady Almeria's health requires a change of place."

"Scarborough

"Scarborough is too long a journey for you to venture on. I hoped to have entertained you in Wales, but for the world I would not press for such a visit at this time, lest any unfortunate accident should destroy the hopes of the family."

"You are very considerate, madam, (I meekly replied;) it is indifferent to me where my lord thinks of going. Were it not with a view to restore my sister's health and spirits, it would be the same thing to me if we remained here."

The old tabby opened her large grey eyes, with a significant stare, at the wonderful alteration in her heretofore "pert niece," and I dare say concluded the "family-way" had produced a revolution "most devoutly to be wished for."

"Why, really, considering all things, I think Bath would be the most desirable place for you. I have had a letter from Mrs. Moystyn, (the aunt I was to have seen in town, a sister to my lord's mother, not

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H

quite

quite so well gifted in the goods of fortune as the rest of the family, for she married unhappily, and is a widow.) She is now at Bath, under a dropfical or gouty complaint. She is a very good woman, and lives genteelly, though not splendidly. Almeria is very fond of her, and I dare say would rejoice to join her there.—I will mention it to my nephew and her. But what shall we do for Sir Roger? The poor man seems to pin himself upon us, because his worthless wife is unfortunately our relation.”

“On that head, (I replied,) my lord and herself were the best judges. I should be happy to coincide in any plan for his and his daughter’s advantage.”

I then withdrew, and was not visible for three or four hours, during which interval the whole business was concluded on. My lord came to me, joy dancing in his eyes; no doubt dame Eleanor had repeated her conjectures, “Would it be agreeable to me

me to go to Bath?" "I had no objection."

"Sir Roger, having settled his affairs, consents to leave Maria with us, as it will be necessary for him to remain in town for a few days, till he hears from Lady Penrickard's father, or has intelligence respecting her; after which he would go into Cornwall for a few months, and then return, and spend the following winter in town, with his daughter. He added, "that Maria's tenderness and his arguments had tended to abate considerably his love and regret for his unworthy lady; the chief reflection that pained him was having robbed his child of so much money to bestow on an ungrateful woman."

I heard his lordship, with the utmost complacence, assented to every thing he proposed, and commanded my feelings so well, that, when Bath was named, though my heart did palpitate, not the least emotion was visible in my countenance, when our

H 2

departure

departure was fixed for three days hence. Mrs. Moystyn is to be written to immediately, to procure accommodations for us.

One little cloud intervened in my delightful prospects. Aunt Nell is to accompany us, my lord and Almeria being earnest with her to spend a month there, previous to visiting the Welch mountains.—However, I must be content to pay a small tax for the completion of my anxious wishes, which I have accomplished like an able mechanist.

Lord Stanton had not left me ten minutes.

I was congratulating myself, and scheming a thousand enchanting amusements, when, lo! your most woeful letter came to interrupt my pleasurable ideas, and prophecy innumerable ills;—and for what?—because

I do not choose to be incorporated among the old oaks, or vegetate with cabbages and potatoes.—“I must love, and deserve the approbation of, my husband.—Why, my dear sententious sister, do you think he would

would long care for me, if I was shut up at Stanton-Place, and admired by no one but himself? Is he not gay, is he not proud of his wife, and an inch taller when she is followed and gazed at? Is it probable, that, at his time of life, he would long be content to be a domestic animal, and "feed upon the features of a wife?" — no! When that wife became a mere piece of household furniture, neither coveted nor admired, — when she became dull, inanimate, and *always to be seen*, believe me, dear Mary, Lord Stanton would soon be tired of the insipid sameness, would fly out in search of novelty, whilst the poor wife, having lost her power of charming, might wish, and wish in vain, to recall the truant, or recover lost ground, by varying her character.

A heart is not easily regained, therefore variety is my motto, and by that I shall keep his attentions alive. As to the consequences you foretel, fear them not; I am

H 3 become

become a downright politician in the affairs of love,—know the fit and the unfit,—can smile graciously to attract attention, and play off alternately inviting and *repulsive* airs, as most convenient. You are astonished at my learning, at my progress in coquetry : nature, — nature, child ! We were intended for opposite characters, light and shade. You are prudish and sentimental, — I gay, volatile, and fond of admiration. Dame Nature has been tolerably liberal to me ; I hate ingratitude, and therefore make a display of her gifts, that mankind may do *her* homage through me.

In short, sister, fashioned as we are, our virtues and follies are constitutional, and I cannot take the trouble to reverse natural decrees, and appear what I am not. Now do not be malicious, and accuse me of duplicity towards Lord Stanton and dame Eleanor ; that is quite another affair. Some people, like children, must be coaxed into what is right and proper, and certainly nothing

nothing can be *more proper* than for a man to oblige his dearee, and follow the lead of her inclinations.

I have a multiplicity of things to do, a thousand orders to give, and you must consider the time I devote to you as a proof of much sisterly affection.—A summons to dinner; adieu.

I positively forbid all reflections upon coquetry and duplicity ; all women are the same, as you shall hear. When I entered the dining-parlour, Sir William Allen introduced his brother to me,—a very elegant young man, who had just taken orders for a good living, in the gift of his brother, — between five and six hundred a year, which, with ten thousand pounds left him by his father, makes him a very consequential young son of the church.

As to Sir William, the man has abso-
lutely fretted himself to a skeleton since the
old Earl's death, despairing now of any

H 4 . success

success with Lady Almeria. When she seated herself at table, so pale, so soft; her tones so pathetic, when she vouchsafed to speak; the visible effect it had on her disconsolate swain, gave me all the inclination in the world to call for hartshorn and burnt feathers, only that at this time I must keep terms with my lord.

He saw the heart felt emotion, and considerably asked him some questions that recalled his spirits a little, and in a few moments, to my utter astonishment, Almeria joined in the conversation. My lord was pleased, Sir William in raptures; every feature in his face was animated, when she unclosed her coral lips. The gipsy saw the instantaneous effects, and pursued her triumph, addressing him several times in a silver tone, and with a softness of manners that the poor love-sick innamorato was half wild with transport. After eyeing *them* for some time, I turned my attention to a similar scene between Maria and the young parson,

parson, who were chopping logic with their tongues, and ogling with their eyes, at a most prodigious rate.

Aunt Nell was busily engaged with Sir Roger, and my ladyship was compelled to be thankful when a smile or word of approbation was passed across the table from my own good lord, or now and then a slight reference on occasional topics from the others, for not a soul had I to *practise* on.

The brothers took leave at the close of the day, in wonderful spirits, after having thrown me into a fit of yawning for an hour, as it was the first time in my life I had ever been a secondary object at my own, or indeed *any*, table ;—but at Bath I may have my revenge.

I asked Almeria how she could answer to her conscience thus to trifle with a man's peace, when she had predetermined never to accept him for a husband ? With an expressive look she replied, "My father loved

Sir

Sir William Allen: I certainly esteem him. The respectful change in his behaviour to me since the death of my dear parent, and entire silence on a subject he knew accorded not with my wishes, entitles him to my thanks; and I do not think I have a right to be less attentive to *him* than to any other gentleman that visits my brother."

"Very wisely and sententially answered. But pray how long has Lady Almeria assumed a new character, and dropped the lively coquet for the sentimental?— You have, I assure you, disappointed *my* expectations, for I was taught to believe my sweet sister a gay, vain, haughty, young, woman of fashion, who had made the most of her claims to admiration;— was I deceived, or has there been a sudden *transformation* from the gay to the grave?"

An eye-beam reproved the question;—
"It is painful to recall to our view follies we are ashamed of. I confess to you, Lady Stanton the character you heard of me was not

not over-charged, and I owe my *reformation*, if you please, to two particular circumstances, which, added to the anxiety I suffered for the torturing disorder that so long oppressed my father, has indeed given a new turn to my sentiments.”

“ May I, without being accused of an impertinent curiosity, ask what the circumstances were that you allude to ? ”

She hesitated a moment, then replied, “ The trifling and ungenerous behaviour of a *gentleman*, and the inconsiderate levity of a *lady*, who exposed the folly of endeavouring to excite general admiration, in such colours, that *her* conduct taught me to blush for *my own* ; and the contempt I felt for her discovered to me how often I must have provoked similar feelings in others, when I indulged myself in the same inexcusable caprices, or rather *vices* ; for, certainly, if we give pain to another by our follies, it is a vicious propensity that is often times pushed on to the most guilty excesses.”

"Wonderful! (exclaimed L.) your reformation, as you call it, is then the effect of reasoning and principles. I hope Sir William Allen will be benefited by the conclusion, for you have given him fresh hopes to day; and, if the reign of coquetry is really at an end, he has cause to congratulate himself on the alteration."

"Your ladyship's *conclusion* is rather too decided, (said she.) A gentleman may be entitled to my esteem and politeness, though my heart rejects him in a nearer point of view."

"Ah! Almeria, (cried L.) that latent spirit of coquetry is not altogether subdued; you still wish to appear fascinating in the eyes of Sir William, and do not dislike the admiration, though you disdain the adorer. It is all very natural, my dear, (seeing she blushed;) and our young friend here is not insensible to the charm of pleasing, for she directed all the artillery of her sweet eyes against the young parson, ambitious, no doubt

doubt, of adding to his stock of wisdom by teaching him a new lesson's.

Poor Maria began to defend herself. Aunt Nell took her part, and Sir Roger changed the subject, by drawing a comparison between young Allen and a sporting curate in his country, of whom he told several ridiculous stories.

I saw Almira was not pleased with me, and that Sir James and my ladyship were the two persons alluded to; but I am certain *she* is not quite so abstracted as she pretends, for she was not backward in displaying her attractions; nor was Maria, young as she is, insensible to the attentions of her beau, though I am sure she entertains a preference for Mr. Gardner. My dear sister, it is human nature: women are born with a desire to please; the same sentiment is in every bosom, only we take different measures to carry our point, and those measures are constitutional ones, therefore

fore little entitled to praise or blame. — This is my creed ; — however, I pursued not the point with Almeria, though *something* provoked, lest I should offend my lord, with whom I am determined to be on the very best terms for the present. This moment a message from aunt Eleanor ; she wishes to see me.

Poor Miss Babbington ! alias Mrs. O'-Clabber. When I entered Mrs. Stanton's dressing-room, she seemed rooted to her chair, one hand laid upon an open letter, that was spread on the table, — the other supporting her spectacles, that seemed intently fixed on the contents of the paper.

On my entrance, the spectacles were removed. " Bless me, niece ! (for, since her *conjectures*, I am much in favour,) I have received a letter from that imprudent woman, Miss Babbington that was. — Aye, it would have been better for her if she had kept her name. She is ready enough to make her complaints to me, but she

she was abominably shy in her courtship and marriage, and now she suffers for it.— She took care I should see but little of her *colonel*, otherwise I should have found him out, or persuaded her against such a hasty indecorous marriage.”

“O madam ! (cried I, tired of her prelude, and curious to see the letter,) I do not wonder at her secrecy. She might justly fear for her lover’s constancy, had you been much together ; she well knew she must lose by the comparison.”

Dear Mary, what a charm has flattery ! It acts like a talisman on the disposition at all ages ; even my good aunt lifted her eyes most graciously upon me.

“My *dear* niece, it would have been better for her if she had had more confidence. There was no danger of me ; I could not have been taken in by such a pretender.— Read the letter, and pity the poor woman’s delusion.”

The

The letter was dated from London; the contents nearly thus. After apologizing for her credulity, and want of candour towards her worthy friend, she relates "that the colonel was introduced to her by Lord Scamper, as a gentleman he had known at Newmarket, who was come into the country on a fishing-party." On the strength of this recommendation, she received him without inquiring further into his character or connexions, an imprudence she sufficiently smarts for. He said he had a handsome estate near Cork, and she believed him.

Very soon he pretended to be violently in love with her, and at length won her consent to marry him. He persuaded her to be secret, as it would be delightful to burst suddenly upon her friends as the lady of a colonel and a man of his fortune. She acquiesced; he went to town, and procured a licence. On his return, and pressing for the marriage, she ventured to name settlement.

"*He* disdained the paltry consideration of fortune: her's should be all settled on herself; he had already given orders for that purpose, and, when they arrived in town, his solicitor would present her with the deeds."

Ashamed of appearing to doubt his honour, (and more *afraid* I suppose of losing her man,) she placed implicit confidence in what he said, and consented to marry him that very night. The following day they proceeded to London, where she gave him an account of all her property, and the writings of her estate.

During a week, he was excessively fond of her, and was continually cursing the lawyers for the delay in her settlement; but it appears he was busily employed in selling out of the Bank, and disposing of the estate here by private contract.

Most fortunately for her, she had made a recent purchase of a small farm in this neighbourhood, about a hundred a year; the

the money had been paid, and the deeds were in the hands of her solicitor, for some forms of law to be executed. This business had never once occurred to her when she gave him possession of her writings; the *tender passion* so entirely occupied her ideas, that she did not carry her thoughts beyond the present advantages she so generously resigned; and he was too eager to avail himself of what he had, more perhaps than he expected, and possibly fearful of being too minute in his inquiries, lest some detection should take place; however it was, this transaction and purchase escaped his rapacious hands.

One morning he told her, that his lawyer had engaged to finish her settlement in two days: on the same day, a new carriage and liveries he had bespoke would be at her door; they would then fix upon a house, and she should blaze in full splendor upon all her acquaintance. Mean time he proposed an excursion out of town for a day or two.

two. She said, she had no great inclination for this "excursion," but thought she ought to comply with his wishes, so made no objection.

They left London, slept one night on the road, and next day arrived at Canterbury. She wondered why he should go so far, or for what purpose he came there. He then told her he expected to meet a very dear friend from France, whom he should be happy to introduce to her, and he knew she would be pleased with his company back to London. He added, that he was to meet him on the half-way to Dover, and requested she would order a handsome dinner, and let it be kept back till six o'clock, when he would certainly return, whether he met his friend or not.

Quite unsuspecting, she complied with his request, and remained alone at the inn. Six,—seven o'clock came, but no colonel. She waited till near eight, and then, quite faint with vexation and hunger, she ordered
up

up a chicken. Anxiety however deprived her of appetite; the hours rolled away; her husband did not appear, and at twelve o'clock at night she was nearly distracted. Just then the carriage he went in returned empty, with a note from him, saying, "he should be with her by four o'clock the following day, a particular circumstance having happened to his friend which would detain him till then."

This information, though in part it relieved her anxiety, yet gave her much vexation. She questioned the post-boy; he said, "when they arrived at the inn in Dover, the gentleman went out for some hours; he then came back, and ordered him to return with the chaise, and note to her, as he should come to Canterbury next day, in a carriage, with a friend."

There was nothing very alarming in this account, yet there seemed a mystery she could not comprehend. For why he had concealed both the destined place and cause of

of his journey till they came to Canterbury, and to leave her alone at an inn for two nights, (for he had taken his servant with him,) was very extraordinary. She waited, though with increasing uneasiness, until the next day, between four and five o'clock. — It was nearly five when she received a letter, dated “four in the morning,” in which he told her that indispensable business had called him to France, for which place he was that moment going to embark. He advised her to return immediately to London, and expect a letter from Calais, in a day or two, that should explain the whole affair: he inclosed a fifty pound note to pay her expences at the inn, and her journey to town.”

This letter, which came by the post, threw her into a state of distraction, that alarmed all the house. She ordered a carriage instantly, and, after discharging her bill, and gaining ~~what~~ information she could, she set off post for Dover. On her

return she early benighted out. Had her arrival

arrival at the inn where he had stopped, she obtained no intelligence; he had not been an hour in that house. She then dispatched messengers to every probable place he might have rested at, without any better success. No one could satisfy the inquiries: two packets had failed in the morning at four and five o'clock, but the passengers were not all known; one was for Boulogne, the other for Calais.

Not contented, she got the master of the inn to accompany her, and hastened to the quay, from whence the passengers embarked; but, though she made the strictest inquiry, she could obtain no information.

Overwhelmed with the bitterest distress, she returned to Canterbury, and proceeded with all haste to London, eager to meet the expected letter that was to "explain every thing." Fatigue and anxiety quite overcame her, and, on her arrival at her lodgings, she was put to bed very ill. The gentlewoman

gentlewoman of the house was surprised to see her return alone; but, though she looked curiosity, her tongue did not express it, and the unfortunate traveller was silent from a state of hope and fear that every coming hour would bring an explanation.

The second day after her return, the much-expected letter came, dated from Boulogne, in which he told her, with the most cutting indifference, "that he had arranged all his affairs to make the tour of Europe, with a party of friends; his return was perfectly uncertain, and undetermined. In the house of Messrs. Child and Co. she would find the sum of five hundred pounds deposited in her name, which he advised her to lay out to the best advantage, as her estate was sold, the produce of which, with the rest of her property, he had taken care of for himself."

This letter threw her into fits, which lasted several hours, but, being at length restored

stored to reason, she sent to Lord Scamper's house, to know if he were in town, and was informed his lordship was gone to France. At first she accused him of being an accomplice with O'Clabber, but had since learned that he had run off with Lady Penrickard. After every diligent inquiry, she could learn nothing relative to her husband, but that a person of that name actually was at Newmarket at the last races, passed himself off as a colonel, and both won and lost large sums there.

She had every reason now to think he had deceived and abandoned her, and was most truly thankful that want of recollection had secured to her the little estate before mentioned, with the income of which she intended to retire into Wales, ashamed of seeing any of her former friends, or returning to this country."

She concluded with entreating aunt Nell to recommend to her some cheap and retired place, where she might live unknown until

until she had any chance of seeing or hearing from her unworthy husband, ~~she~~ a chance not likely to happen, as he had given her no address, not even promised to write a second letter.

So much for poor Miss Babbington! who has purchased a matronly title at a very dear rate.

After a long sermon on folly, imprudence, and the forwardness of the age, (though her friend was of the old school, I am sure,) she asked me what could be done for the ill-treated and credulous creature, whose property was so basely stolen.

I said I was very incompetent to advise on such an occasion; she had better consult my lord. For my own part, I thought her scheme of retirement in Wales was a very proper one, as here she would be the jest of every person who knew her, since her own credulity and indecent hurry to get married had plunged her into the difficulties of which she complained.

Another sermon was begun on the old thread-bare topics, which I interrupted, by pleading my engagements on paper with you, and left her to the contemplation of her own wisdom, in contrast with the follies of her acquaintance.——

And now, having filled my third sheet of paper, I must close our present account with an expectation of hearing from you soon, with the characters of your new associates, and a description of the country you inhabit. Duty where it is due, and affectionate regards from

Your

C. M. STANTON.

Maria has written to you I hear,—a romantic epistle I warrant.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

EARL STANTON TO BEVIL GARDNER,
ESQ.

My dear Gardner,

II Have so often troubled you with my ca-
pricious complaints, that I dare say you
wish every letter at the devil, when you see the
superscription in my hand, and wonder men
cannot have wisdom enough to keep their
follies and misfortunes to themselves.

Well, pr'ythee, have patience once more to listen not to complaints, but to transports, to the effusions of tenderness. By my foul !

I 2

this charming Caroline can mould me as she pleases; she has given me a new existence: I have no pleasures, no happiness, independent of her; and, "tell it not in Garth!" publish it not among my old riotous companions! but let me whisper it to you, that the gay rattling Gaywit is become the serious thinking Stanton, the fondness of husbands, and the most domesticated man in the world. And all this revolution is brought about by a woman!

———Lovely woman!

We had been brutes without you.

Yes, my dear Gardner, I am truly happy.

My Caroline, my wife, loves me! Her affection daily increases: she is become tender, soft, and obliging. I now see plainly that it was the innocent gaiety of her heart, her playful spirits that at first gave me so much alarm, and that I wronged her in translating every trifling incident and expression into meanings far distant from her heart.

Tomorrow

Tomorrow we take wing for Bath, where I expect you to join us ; our stay cannot exceed six weeks, as the season is so far advanced.

You may assure yourself of a welcome from Lady Stanton, as I have perfectly restored you to her good opinion, by a candid confession of my own ridiculous whims, in which you had no share. Come to us then, I command you.

Sir Roger Penrickard is gone to London. The poor knight seems more to regret his money than his lady, and so he ought. I cannot for the foul of me conceive how Scamper came to form such an attachment. Horfes, not women, I thought was his passion. They were so little together, and you know we suspected her of love for Nichols, and jealousy of my wife.—What produced such a change is inexplicable to me ; but “women are riddles,” and men are strange beings when a whim takes them ;

them; for a whim, not a serious attachment, I am convinced, induced Scamper to pursue this frolic. His whole stud is gone after him, so he means to dash away in Paris.

Miss Pensickard, my aunt, and Almeria, accompany us to Bath. Sir William Allen, and his brother George, who is in orders, follow next week. I shall expect *you* will not linger on the way, but immediately hasten to

Your friend,

STANTON.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

BEVIL GARDNER, ESQ. TO EARL STANTON.

BELIEVE me, my dear Stanton, that it is with the most friendly warmth of heart I congratulate you on the recovery of your peace and reason. May your happiness be unclouded, and your confidence, so becoming a noble spirit, deserve the affection of your charming wife!

I am persuaded nothing on earth is so likely to make a man of sense a happy and a reasonable being as the society of an amia-

I 4

ble

ble woman ; and assure yourself, my practice shall justify my precept, when I can prevail upon any woman of merit to accept my hand. I am already half in love with a female character,—the lady I have never seen ; but, if she has a third of the virtues and accomplishments I have heard described, she has only to appear, and, like Cæsar, may boast of instant conquest.

I am sorry I cannot meet you at Bath.—I had previously made an engagement for Southampton, and you know I am a man of my word. Most likely we may stumble on each other before the season is over, before the wintry blasts and falling snows send us shivering from the country to the warm and smoky town. Till then I shall expect a punctual correspondence, addressed to my house in town, and the letter will travel after me wherever I am.

I was told yesterday, Scamper and his chere amie are in Paris, figuring away at a violent

violent rate, particularly on horseback. It seems she is an excellent horfewan, is handsome, and no bad person, you know; consequently, mounted on one of Scamper's capital mares, she attracts general attention, and gratifies the fellow's vanity both ways. If you will pardon the pun, I think they will contrive between themselves, their horses, and grooms, to *scamper* through his fortune in a very short time.

You will possibly see Sir James Nichols at Bath, for I am told he is there, and quite in high fashion still. I have often, when endeavouring to develop his character, felt surprised to account for the general predilection of the women in his favour. He is not handsome, nor very young, careless and variable in his attachments, takes but little pains to acquire esteem, and seems to play off one woman against another, merely to give himself consequence, without, I believe, any real propensity to intrigue. The reputation, with-

out the trouble, is all he wants, and of such a contemptible being who would be jealous?

Affure yourself, my dear Stanton, he is not a *dangerous* man, though female folly has stamped him into a fashionable, and, as they say, a fascinating, one; therefore, if you do meet, and he renews his acquaintance, think of him only as a monkey playing off his tricks to amuse the company. His passion is vanity; indifference and contempt is more mortifying than resentment to such a trifling self-consequential fellow.

The town grows empty. The butterflies of both sexes are on the wing for watering places, there to exhibit the same faces and the same follies, the same dull monotony of ridiculous foibles that have already tired half their acquaintance in town.

A life of fashion has certainly the least variety in nature. One system is pursued, varying

varying only in difference of place; and its votaries grow tired, languid, and sick, of the same pleasures, or rather fatigues; for, where there is no variety, there can be but little pleasure; yet still follow the lead of folly, because they have not capacities or resolution to break the chain, and attach themselves to rational and improving occupations.

Monson told me the other day, that "he was surpris'd such a queer sober mortal as I am had associated so much with a rattle like Gaywit; but he supposed I had made a proselyte of the foolish fellow; for, since his ridiculous marriage with a country cherry-cheeked beauty, he had forsaken his friends."

I replied, "that I congratulated my prescience in being able to discover some seeds of virtue in the mind of Lord Gaywit, which, when the weeds of folly were drawn out, had budded forth in Lord *Stanton*, and gave promise of happiness to himself

and his friends;—*friends*, who deserved the appellation; those he had deserted from were only *companions*.”

He shouted aloud, “Swoons, Gardner! thou shalt have a convenient tub, placed in the Green Park; there, calling all the ungodly ones about thee, thou shalt preach against life and fashion, and produce Stanton as a prototype for thy system, and the imitation of all the gay fellows about town. — There will be glorious work, if thou effect the reformation of the profane!”

I heard him with a scornful smile, and replied, “I was not fond of works of supererogation, much less was I inclined to waste time on such unprofitable subjects as young men in fashionable life.” Another loud laugh, and “good bye t’ye, Gardner,” concluded our conversation.

Make my best respects to Lady Stanton, and the other ladies of your family. If I
really

really have any precience, I think Miss Penrickard has an excellent heart, and in good hands may prove a very valuable young woman. I pity the poor knight; he smarts for his folly, in marrying a gay fashionable lady, who united herself to his *riches*, not to his person: *her* punishment is yet to come.

Adieu, dear Stanton. Persevere in your plan for domestic happiness, and let the idle and dissolute ridicule what they cannot comprehend.

Sincerely yours,

BEVIL GARDNER.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

MISS BOYLE TO MRS. ROWE.

THE philosophers, who rail against the world, at best allow it to be but a chequered state, good and evil succeeding each other ; and that nothing more than a negative degree of happiness is ever attainable. I am half inclined to adopt their system, though I would still hope the good preponderates.

I have a great deal to say to you, and foresee this will be another large packet.— To be methodical, I must have recourse to my memorandum-book. I now find much

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benefit

benefit from the custom I have long indulged myself in, of making minutes when any thing happens that interests me: it is of infinite assistance to recollection.

When I concluded my last letter, I was engaged to walk with Miss Gordon to the Mount. We were both incited by curiosity to take an accurate survey of the ruined castle; for, although she has resided so long at Elgin, her mother's indisposition and melancholy had circumscribed their walks within a very narrow compass, and she was almost as much a stranger as myself.

We eat a very early dinner, and sallied forth, like the knights in romances, to achieve an adventure in a desolated castle, though we were not apprehensive of giants or monsters. On our arrival, we rested some time in the broken portico, admiring the prospects, and to reconnoitre the ground we were to tread.

We

We entered through a range of pillars, once magnificent; a large and lofty hall, round which run a gallery that opened into a number of apartments, but the stairs were broken and decayed. We went on through the ground-rooms, some of which we could not enter for rubbish and broken fragments; and, indeed, the whole seemed in a state so ruinous, that I thought the roof over us was only suspended by a thread, which a sudden gulf of wind might crumble into ashes. You see I cannot boast of my courage, though I may of my perseverance, for I really trembled sometimes as I walked, yet still went on.

To the left we entered into a suite of rooms, which, fronting the South, and being sheltered by a garden, the weeds of which were, in some places, higher than the windows, seemed to have suffered less from the depredations of time than other parts of the building. In one of these rooms, that had seats in the windows, we were

were very glad to rest, and were lamenting the instability of human labours, and the misfortunes which had driven the owners of this once superb castle to fly from their possessions, and leave them mouldering into dust.

I stopped suddenly, from fancying I heard footsteps over my head. "Do you not hear something?" I asked, much alarmed.

"I do, (replied Miss Gordon, in a low terrified tone.) Surely somebody is walking over us."

Again we listened, silent and affrighted, and again heard the steps more plain and quick. We both rose, and without speaking, walked mechanically to the door, when, at the end of the next apartment, that led into the hall, another small door in a lobby, which we had not observed, was suddenly opened against us by a man.

We started back; Miss Gordon involuntarily shrieked. The person, who had
alarmed

alarmed us, seemed little less surprised; yet, in fact, there was nothing really terrifying in the meeting, except the loneliness of the place, for the same motive might have carried him there as guided us; but that moment recollection did not betray us. We must have exhibited a curious scene for a painter, — we shrinking back, pale and trembling; the man holding the door, and staring at us with equal wonder and emotion.

He first spoke: "Be not alarmed, ladies. I had no idea that such persons were to be met with in this desolated place. I entreat you not to be apprehensive of any accident or insult here."

It is impossible to give you any notion of the voice and manner that accompanied those words: it was melancholy, interesting, and affecting. It gave me courage to reply: "We as little expected, sir, to meet any strangers here. Curiosity incited

us to range over this ruinous building: the same inducement doubtless brought you here."

"I cannot say it did, madam, (answered he with a mournful air,) but will you do me the honour to walk up stairs? you may then rest yourselves, and I will readily attend you over such parts of the castle as may be entered without danger, for the greater part are in ruins, and others may hourly be expected to crumble into dust."

We then saw he was standing at the foot of a stair-case. Observing we hesitated, and looked at each other, he added, "If I am too intrusive, pardon me, ladies. I shall not go one step farther without your permission."

This delicate politeness dispersed our apprehensions. We accepted of his invitation, and followed him up-stairs, though not entirely free from apprehension.

We entered a room, which was over that we had been in. There was a small deal table,

table, with some books upon it; one laid open; a long form, or rather a broad board, that seemed to have some bedding on it, a quilt being thrown over; it was not raised above a foot from the floor; one stool and an old cane-back chair stood by the table, and at one end of the room, upon another low form, was a jug, two or three plates, and some oaten cakes.

We just looked round on this strange room and furniture, whilst he was placing the stool and chair for us to sit on.

“Good heavens! (I exclaimed,) why, surely, sir, you do not reside here?”

“Indeed I do, madam, (answered he, with a faint smile.) I have lived in this mansion above three years, and most probably I shall continue here for the remainder of my days, unless the building tumbles into ruins, and leaves no habitable place. I am sorry, ladies, I have no refreshments to offer you. My wants are very moderately supplied, and, not expecting the

the honour of such guests, I have no superfluities.

We gazed on each other with astonishment, each wishing the other to speak, yet ashamed of appearing impertinently inquisitive. "Have you never, sir, (said I, at last,) been broken in upon by accidental travellers till now?"

"I have not (replied he;) I have indeed sometimes seen people on the mount viewing the building; but its appearance is so very desolate, that I believe no one conceives there is a habitable room, or ventures beyond the hall, where the broken pillars and decayed stair-case represents curiosity, and the travellers to this part of the world are very few."

Indeed the very room he was in bore evident marks of the ravages of time; the floor was broken in many places; pieces of boards, joined together, supplied the place of window-shutters, for glass there was none;

none; and, in the winter, he told us, he was obliged to keep them fastened, and burn a lamp all day; but, in good weather, he enjoyed a very beautiful prospect over what had once been an extensive garden.

After sitting a short time, we arose;—"Are there any apartments worth seeing?" said Miss Gordon.

"None better than this, (answered he;) and so little capable of paying you for the trouble, and, indeed, some risk, in examining them, that, unless you are very curious, I would advise you ladies not to make the attempt; at the same time I offer my services to conduct you where there is least danger."

"After what you have said, sir, (returned I,) it would be folly to explore places that can afford us no gratification; and it appears we ought to be very thankful for the chance that conducted our meeting, otherwise we might have suffered for our female curiosity."

"You

“ You are going then, ladies ? (said he ;) and perhaps I may never see you more. My evil genius pursues me even here ; a temporary delight must be followed by days of regret, and this accidental and transient meeting was ordered only to increase my wretchedness, by rousing me from the apathy which has long frozen up every pleasurable wish, and consigned me to despair.”

There was something so touching in his tone of voice, so expressive of melancholy in his looks, that I could hardly suppress my tears. “ Do you never come down into the town, sir ? ”

“ No, madam, (he replied ;) my little wants are supplied from Forres, a small town about ten miles off.”

I hesitated, — Miss Gordon pinched my arm ; I guessed her meaning. “ Judge not unfavourably of my motives, sir, if I ask you whether it is not possible for you to alter your way of life, — to reside in a more comfortable situation, — to enjoy a select society,

—a society where misfortune will have peculiar claims to attention from similar circumstances and sympathizing hearts?”

“Oh! no, no! (exclaimed he, putting his hand to his forehead, and turning from, and then to us again, greatly agitated;) no! society has lost all its charms for me: here only I can have rest; peace I can find no where; but the dull monotony of this life stagnates one’s powers, and renders misery so familiar, that it ceases to be oppressive.—Any change must be productive of fresh sorrow, as I feel at this painful moment, when my senses are at war with my reason.”

“I am inexpressibly grieved, sir, that we have unintentionally been the cause of “fresh sorrow.” We will not longer intrude. You have our heart-felt wishes, sir, for your returning peace, and the comfort we have interrupted.”

“Stop! oh stop! (cried he, seizing my hand with an eagerness that frightened me.)

You

You are angels, deign then to pity the most forlorn of mankind. Tell me, do you reside in Elgin?”

“We do, though in different houses; I with a father, the most respectable of men; this lady with a mother, who is the most exemplary and revered of women.”

“And such beings are to be found in this remote part of the world! Good God! virtue is then fled from the great world, to seclude itself among the vulgar and illiterate! Well, well, what should virtue and honour do among the great?—Riches and folly are their passports into fame, and a titled villain may look with contempt on the honest man, whose integrity is above corruption.”

His eyes darted fire, his bosom heaved with excessive emotion. We were still standing, and, indeed, irresolute whether to go or stay; presently he observed our situation; his eyes lost their fierceness.

“Forgive me, ladies ; I have been for a moment beside myself. If you must go, may heaven preserve you ! There is no danger in the road, otherwise I would attend you. My wishes are contradictory, perhaps I ought not to desire you should again visit this place. To you it can communicate no pleasure, and I may have caused deeply to repent of my temerity.—No, I will not hazard the dangerous indulgence.”

“My father,” I said——

He interrupted me, “No, I will see no men : I have forsworn all intercourse with base treacherous man.”

“A misanthrope, my dear fir, must always be unjust.”——

He again interrupted me ; “Dear fir !”
O-flattering words !——But you are standing ; let me not detain you. Should you think of a walk here again,—but pleasure and I have shaken hands for ever, why then should I wish to see such beings as ought only to illumine the dwellings of the happy !”

We

We were both affected. I was really just then incapable of speaking. Miss Gordon replied, "You know us not; decorum might prevent our return, but we would sooner seek the unfortunate than court the prosperous."

"Is it possible! (he cried.) Go, then, charming creatures; leave me to reflect, that, *perhaps*, goodness is not yet banished from the earth. With me you are as safe as the purity of your own thoughts can wish. I cannot follow you, but *here I am* always to be found."

We took the hint, and made towards the stairs; he made an offer of his hand, but instantly drew it back, attended us to the broken portico, and, with a bow, that would not have disgraced a drawing-room, he took a silent leave.

We proceeded down the mount, deeply engaged in thinking about this extraordinary man, who, under all the disadvantages of a loose and shabby great coat, hair

K 2 disheveled,

disheveled, and out of powder, and indeed his whole appearance bespeaking distress both of mind and body, had still the air of a gentleman, and did not appear more than between thirty and forty years of age.

Miss Gordon concluded that love, disappointed, or unhappy, had driven him to this miserable place. I conceived some misfortunes, still more afflictive, the ingratitude and baseness of his connexions, had made him forsake the world. We knew not how far we should be right in relating our adventure, yet both reprobated the idea of concealment from our best friends.

Until very lately, I never had a thought that I could not freely communicate to my dear father; but necessity has compelled me to hide such things from him as could only give him pain, and surely I hope the motive will excuse me in the eye of prudence, though secrecy is what I detest between such friends; I therefore told Miss

Gordon,

Gordon, that it would be better candidly to relate what had passed, as we could depend upon the honour and delicacy of our friends not to pervade the retirement of this recluse, and should also have the benefit of their advice, whether to pursue or give up any further acquaintance with him.

She readily coincided in my opinion ; and, when we came to our good minister's, where we had left Mrs. Gordon and my father, the former instantly cried out, " If I may presume to translate your looks, ladies, you have been uncommonly entertained."

" Your penetration does you credit, sir, (I replied.) We tallied forth, like two courageous damsels, in search of adventures ; and I assure you we have not been disappointed, but have met with a very extraordinary one in the castle."

" In the castle ! (repeated Mr. Ross ;) what could have happened there to interest

you ?

you? You have not discovered a concealed treasure I should suppose."

"Upon my word, (said Miss Gordon,) I think it is very probable we may have done so."

Seeing they all looked surpris'd, I added, "But not in silver nor gold. In short, we will not keep you in suspense:" then, at the request of Miss Gordon, I related our unexpected meeting with the inhabitant of the castle.

They were all surpris'd, particularly Mr. Ross, who had been in the habits of walking very often in and about the castle, without the smallest idea of its having an inmate. Our friends seem'd all concern'd, and interest'd for this unfortunate recluse, and desirous that we should cultivate his acquaintance. "If guilt has driven him from society, (said the good minister,) repentance must have closely followed him, and we may in time speak comfort to his mind: if misfortunes, and the ills which
abound

abound in life, have assailed and made him wretched, where can he find an asylum more fitted to teach him fortitude, patience, and submission,—more calculated to restore his peace, than in this society? Yes, young ladies, you must reconcile this forlorn one to taste the blessings of a social and friendly intercourse; but we must go cautiously to work; the ladies must have all the business, as well as all the merit, of this restoration.”

“I think so, (said my father,) yet there are many objections I own to trusting them alone on another visit.”

“Indeed, (replied I,) though I have not much apprehension of any degree of impropriety from the gentleman, yet we should feel very unpleasant to consider ourselves as wholly in his power. Surprise, and his respectful behaviour, lessened our terror at the first meeting, but I should suffer considerably if we went voluntarily a second time avowedly to meet him; at the same time, he seemed so furious when I barely

hinted

hinted at my father, that I have every reason to believe he would fly from us, and bitterly resent an attempt to introduce others to him without his permission."

"The case is certainly delicate, (said Mrs. Gordon.) We will consult our pillars upon it, and each shall communicate their sentiments to-morrow morning, if the gentlemen will favour me with a call at my cottage."

This was readily agreed to, and we amused ourselves the remainder of the evening, by sporting a variety of different opinions as to the events which had occasioned this solitary stranger to renounce society."

In the morning, Mr. Rofs called on my father, and, as a female does not like to be excluded from council, upon matters where she is to make a principal figure, I accompanied them to Mrs. Gordon's, where, after due deliberation, it was agreed upon that the gentlemen should repair to the castle at least two hours preceding us, carefully guarding

guarding against being seen, and then enter, if possible, unobserved into the room, underneath where we had first seated ourselves, unless they could conceal themselves near the portico; no other probable means being found out for them to be within hearing without being discovered.

Shall I confess the truth? I really felt very impatient for the dinner-hour, and watched a few flying clouds with great anxiety, lest any falling showers should interrupt our walk; happily my fears were groundless. The afternoon proved uncommonly fine, and, at a proper time, after our guardians, we hastily climbed the mount, and, not without some trepidation, we passed through the portico and hall to the door in the lobby, which, on trial, we found was fastened inside: for a moment we stood irresolute; but, gathering courage, from knowing we had protectors, I ventured to knock pretty loudly. Presently we heard a voice, in a low tone, ask who was

K 5.

there?

there? I replied, "friends." Instantly the door was unbolted, and the recluse stood before us.

"Is it possible! (cried he, pleasure dancing in his eyes;) have you indeed the goodness to seek an unhappy solitary being, who can communicate neither pleasure nor entertainment?" Sure your's must be the most generous and humane hearts that ever females possessed!"

"Do not give us too much credit, (said Miss Gordon,) lest it should be found hereafter that we do not deserve it. You forget that female curiosity is of itself a sufficient motive to bring us here again."

"With very many of your sex, madam, I grant it might be so, but I am deceived indeed, if not far more generous ideas induced you, ladies, to visit a miserable and secluded man."

"We can have no objection to hold your favourable opinion, (I replied;) but, as the weather

weather is very delightful, would it not be more agreeable to sit out in the portico, than in a dismal room?"

"As you please, madam, (answered he, leading the way;) it is an indulgence I seldom enjoy, for my airings are more distant."

We seated ourselves on some broken fragments, and entered into conversation on the surrounding prospects; but I took notice several times that he observed us with thoughtfulness, and looked very warily round, as if in apprehension of being seen. After a good deal of desultory conversation, I said, he had given us proofs that his mind was well calculated to participate in the pleasures of a select society; that we had friends who had been unfortunate, and had therefore fled from the gay and prosperous world to a quiet retreat, where rational pleasures were to be enjoyed without envy or remorse.

"Happy, (exclaimed he,) happy are those whose bosoms are strangers to guilt and re-

K 6 morse!

more! The common misfortunes of life, loss of fortune, fame, or friends, may sink a man's spirits, but not subdue his mind; but, when every hour's reflection weighs the soul down with a remembrance of crimes never to be atoned for,—guilt, which no repentance can obliterate, what can society do for such a man? and how dare I, wretch as I am, indulge myself with the company of angels!—Ladies, you know me not; if you did, you would fly, you would abhor me;—you must do so, for I abhor myself.”

He looked so wild, that we were terrified; I said, in a tremulous voice, “ You judge yourself too severely. Heaven, we should hope, will accept of a repentance so sincere as yours, whatever may have been your errors.”

“ Errors! (repeated he, interrupting me,) errors!—let me not again deceive unsuspecting innocence. No, I will see you no more! for, know, the wretch before you
has

has wronged the generous and hospitable bosom that loved him,—has seduced innocence by the basest duplicity,—has ruined the wife, killed her husband, once his best friend, destroyed the reason of the seduced, unhappy woman !”

Just then Miss Gordon leaned her head against my shoulder, and I saw she was faint. Though almost petrified by the horrid things I had heard, I cried out, “My dear Miss Gordon, are you ill ?”

“Gordon ! (exclaimed he,) what Gordon !—who,—what is her father ?”

“Her father was a captain in the army,” I replied.

He staggered back, attempted to run, but large drops bedewed his face, and in an instant he was senseless on the broken fragments that laid scattered on the ground.

I shrieked aloud, for I was supporting Miss Gordon, who had very little appearance of life. Mr. Ross and my father were most happily within hearing, and run to my assistance.

assistance. Their surprise was extreme ;—one raised the unhappy man, while the other helped my friend, whose senses began to return.

In a short time, life once more visited the gentleman, owing in some measure to a great effusion of blood, which flowed from a wound in the side of his head, and which they bound up with a handkerchief. When he opened his eyes, and saw who were assisting him, he struggled violently to break from them, but he was too feeble. “Take me, then, (he cried,) to a prison,—to death ! life has long been a burthen to me.”

“Compose yourself, sir, (said Mr. Rofs ;) here are only friends. We do not wish to intrude, only to be of service to you.”

He looked at Mr. Rofs, then turned his eyes on Miss Gordon, whose agitations were but too visible.

“Tell me, madam, I conjure you, did not my senses deceive me. Is your name Gordon,—had you ever a brother ?”

“Oh !

"Oh! yes, yes! (exclaimed she, covering her eyes with her hand;) mention him not. *You* are——"

"His murderer! (said he fiercely,) the most abhorred of villains!—Heaven is just! who can fly from his all-searching eye.—Providence has conducted me to this spot that retribution may overtake me. Do with me what you will?"

He threw himself on the ground, with a deep groan, that vibrated to every heart. We were all motionless, not knowing what to say.

At length Mr. Ross, recovering a little, advised my father to conduct us home. *He* would stay with the unhappy man, till he was in a proper state to be trusted alone. At the same time he advised a profound silence as to the discovery we had made, which, he said, could only tend to renew the most poignant sorrow in the bosom of Mrs. Gordon; and therefore, in such a case, deception might be deemed pardonable.

We

We followed the good man's advice; Poor Miss Gordon spoke not a word, but was so greatly agitated, that it was with difficulty we supported her to our house, where we endeavoured to restore her to composure before she appeared at home. A plentiful effusion of tears calmed the tumults of her mind, and we agreed to acquaint Mrs. Gordon that he had acknowledged himself unhappy from guilt and contrition, but refused to disclose his story, or admit of any society.

My father attended Miss Gordon to her mother's, and, on his return, assured me that he had left her tolerably easy, and the good lady free from any suspicion that she had been more than commonly affected. It was very late before Mr. Rofs came to us, and we had been for some time very uneasy at the delay, the expression of his countenance, did not tend to remove our concern.

“ I think (said the good man) that I have seldom suffered more real anguish than this unhappy

unhappy man has given me. When you had left me, (pursued he,) I strove by words of tenderness and pity to acquire some influence over him; at first he was fullen and fierce. I affected to take no notice of his menacing looks, but proceeded in my discourse, called myself a man of sorrows, and a friend to the wretched; explained the rank I held in society, and besought him to accept of my friendly endeavours to calm his tumultuous passions, speak peace to his mind, and lead to that true repentance which we were taught to hope might be productive of pardon both in this world and the next.

I spoke above a quarter of an hour, without the smallest interruption. At length, calling upon him in the most pathetic manner to accept of my services, he suddenly rose, caught my hand, and burst into a torrent of tears. I let them flow for some time, and gently pressed the hand which held mine. It was a few minutes before he could

could speak. "It is the hand of Providence that has conducted all, (said he, in a solemn tone,) I bow to its decrees. Hear my story, sir, and then tell me what a wretch like me can have to hope."

I let him proceed, without giving the least intimation that I knew any part of his guilt.

"He was the second son of Sir Richard Morgan, and chose the army for his profession. The regiment he was in was ordered to the East Indies. A very short time before he became acquainted with Mr. Gordon, he received intelligence that his father and brother were both dead, and he succeeded to the title and fortune, in consequence of which he intended to give up his commission, and return to England. He was much pleased with Mr. Gordon, whose liking was reciprocal, and he introduced him to his lady. From the first hour he saw her, he was violently attached to her, and fought.

sought every opportunity to gain her particular attention.

Mr. Gordon, whose mind had been ruffled by disappointments, who felt oppressed with obligations, and interested for his sister, though he loved his wife extremely, yet he had not that engrossing passion for her as to subdue the anxiety which often preyed upon his spirits, and made him less attractive and pleasant, though not less affectionate. Morgan saw this, and made his advantages ; like the wily serpent at the ear of Eve, he infused the subtle poison of discontent, and taught the too-credulous Mrs. Gordon to believe only the most base and interested motives had induced her husband to marry her ; while his flattery, tenderness, and assiduity, completed the work of alienating her affections from Mr. Gordon, whose unsuspicious heart all this time cherished the false friend, and confided in the deceiving wife.

At

At length, he succeeded in his infamous schemes, and she engaged to elope, and accompany him to England ; not, he confessed, from a real depravity of heart, but seduced into belief that her husband loved her not, nor would regret her, so that he possessed the uncle's property.

They fled together, and were unexpectedly overtaken by Gordon. The consequence we know. When Gordon fell, he exclaimed, "I perish by the hand of a false friend ! May heaven forgive and bless my dear deluded wife !" Some other words died on his tongue, but those reached her ear, and she fell into fits, from which she recovered but with the loss of reason. Morgan, stung with remorse and terror, fled from an object that harrowed up his soul, and oppressed with every painful sensation such accumulated guilt must produce, embarked for England, careless of existence, and miserable beyond conception.

The

The anxiety of his mind produced a fever, from which he was barely recovering, when the ship he was in put into Cork-harbour. He went on shore, and again relapsed. The ship failed, as he intended going to England by land. The fever fell upon his nerves, plunged him into a deep melancholy, which induced him to form a resolution of living in some remote place, at a distance from all society. He took measures for remittances from England, without letting his family know of his retired plan.—He wandered all through Ireland, and then came into Scotland, without making a single acquaintance in either place.

Coming to Elgin, he had been very minute in examining the castle, and, finding it was totally deserted, and uninhabitable by any sociable being, he resolved to make it his chief residence; and, to avoid being noticed in the town, he went once a week to the small town of Forres, and purchased the few necessaries he wanted.

His

His hatred to society daily augmented, and it was grown painful to him when he was obliged to ask for the supply nature demanded. He added, that, when he was first surprised by the ladies, he knew not whether he should fly from them or stay, but the fascinating charms of beauty rivetted his eyes and softened his heart. After they departed, his conscience upbraided him for receiving the civilities of two amiable, innocent, young women. Unworthy, and covered with crimes as he was, he resolved to fly from the dangerous indulgence he so little deserved, to quit that castle, and repair to another near Forres, and find a retreat there.

He was arranging his matters to depart, not suspecting the ladies would return again the following day, when the knock at the stair-door caused every pulse to beat, and his resolution to waver. For a moment he stood irresolute, half-inclined to disregard the summons, but a repetition of the knock-

ing more loudly overcame his powers of resistance, and he flew to the door. "There was a fate in it, (concluded he.) I was dragged irresistibly on, to exhibit the vilest of mankind before two innocent hearts, who must shrink from me with hatred and horror. *Now*, indeed, I shall never see them more ! Tell me then, sir, where I may hide myself from all eyes ; even this desolated building is not secure : where then shall I fly from the sight of human kind, for, like a basilisk, I wound wherever I appear."

"Greatly affected (continued Mr. Ross,) by the story and feelings of this wretched man, I endeavoured, by every argument I could adduce both from religion and reason, to calm his despair, and inspire him with sentiments suitable to his situation. After innumerable objections and answers, I succeeded in drawing a promise from him, that he would not leave the castle for the present, and that he would admit me tomorrow with unreserved freedom.

"I

“ I had infinite difficulty in bringing him to this concession ; and, when I demanded the pledge of his honour that he would not quit his habitation till he had seen me again,

“ Honour ! (repeated he, with great emphasis and a ghastly smile,) what security is the word or *honour* of a man who has *seduced the wife of his friend*, and deprived that much-injured friend of life !—who has seen the miserable victim of his seduction deprived of her senses, and, if she lives, she must exist in never-ceasing misery and self-reproach !

“ I’ll tell you what, sir, (said he, in a quiet tone, laying his hand upon my shoulder,) conscience,—*conscience* that now stings *me* to the heart, tells me the villain who seduces innocence,—who wrongs the husband’s bed, and who lifts his hand against the life of his fellow-creature, even without the horrid aggravation, reserved for *me* alone, of destroying an injured confiding friend,—that villain must one day feel the pangs of guilt, — of horror ! He may deceive the world,—

world,—he may blunt the edge of remorse by repeated dissipations, that for a time preclude leisure for thought; but the day *will* come, the hour must arrive, when self-delusion is over,—when he can no longer varnish over crimes by the false gloss of custom and gallantry; and then, like me, he will wish for annihilation, look back on the long catalogue of vices for which he can never atone, shrink from the retrospection with horror, and view the future with terror and despair!”

Shocked at the acuteness of his feelings, I again exerted myself to compose his mind, and have at length, I hope, brought him to a great degree of calmness, such as may tend to abate the fever, which, by the heat of his hands and high colour, I was apprehensive might have flown to his brain.”

Both my father and myself were much touched with the sad relation of Mr. Ross, and felt ourselves interested for the unhappy victim

victim to his own crimes. It was impossible to wish him a severer punishment than he now endured, for what can equal self-condemnation?

The events of the day so affected my spirits, and agitated my mind, that sleep forsook my pillow, and I arose, at a very early hour, quite unrefreshed. I was walking in our little fore-court for air, when Mr. Rofs appeared, being obliged to pass our door in his way to the mount. After the common salutations, he said, "I have had but little rest, and am impatient to visit the forlorn inhabitant of the castle." I sincerely wished that he might convey comfort to a despairing mind, and he hastened by the hill.

We had scarce done breakfast, before Miss Gordon came in, impatient to hear Mr. Rofs's account. We repeated his relation to us of Morgan's story, and, dreadful as the recital was, she could not but confess

self humanity demanded pity for a man so bitterly conscious of his crimes.

“ You cannot conceive (said she) how painful I feel this secret, which I dare not communicate to my mother, and in which she is so nearly concerned. Unaccustomed to disguise a single thought from her, I feel as if I was guilty of a crime.”

“ Surely not, my dear Miss Gordon, (said my father,) to conceal a story which must revive sorrows that are only stifled, not subdued, by reason and strong efforts ;—to wound afresh the bosom of a parent, when no benefit can be derived by it to any individual. A concealment of this kind, so far from being criminal, is meritorious, because you preserve the peace of one so dear to you.”

“ You persuade me I am justified, sir, (returned she,) and I am sure your judgment must be right. I dare say this wretched man will not remain in our neighbourhood ; indeed it is impossible he can do so. Alas !

L 2 when

when I lament the premature death of a worthy brother, I feel also for his unfortunate wife, whose crimes are certainly *extenuated* by the confession of her seducer, though they cannot be excused; and poor Mr. Brent has been a severe sufferer by an act of humanity and generosity to a stranger."

We passed some hours, talking over this extraordinary affair, until the time reminded Miss Gordon of her dinner-hour. We promised to call on her in the evening, and she returned to her mother.

It was about six in the evening; I was at work, my father reading, when we saw Mr. Rofs coming to the door. I hastened to open it: his countenance struck cold to my heart. When he had seated himself, "I read your impatience, (said he;) arm yourselves to hear dismal tidings."

"Good God! (I exclaimed,) surely the poor man has destroyed himself!"

"No,

“No, not so, thank heaven : he has not that crime added to his charge ; but I will not keep you in suspense.

“When I came to the castle, and entered the hall, I saw nothing of him, and my mind misgave me to judge as you have done. I went to the stair-case door, which I found only pulled to, mounted the stairs, and entered the room you had described to me ; there, on a kind of wretched bed, laid the poor man, looking the image of death, and excessively sick. He extended his hand to me ; it was in a cold perspiration. “What ails you, sir ? Are you ill ?” I asked.

“I believe dying, (said he, faintly.) I certainly fractured my skull, though I was only sensible of the cut in the side of my head.”

“Bless me ! (said I, starting up,) let me go for assistance.”

He was again very sick, but held my hand. “It is too late ! (returned he, as soon as he could speak.) Heaven is most merciful,—life is a burthen. I have been very ill all

night ;

night ; I have addressed my Creator. Join your prayers with mine, that years of repentance may have atoned for my sins.—*Pray, (cried he most earnestly,) pray ! that is all you can now do for me. Leave me not, if you have charity.*”

I saw, indeed, evident signs of his dissolution. I knelt by him, and prayed most fervently, in which he joined, as long as he could speak, only once interrupting me to say where his sister lived, and to entreat that I would write to England, and give intelligence of his death in the most favourable manner I could, consistent with truth, that she and her husband might not be too severely shocked.

About two hours ago, he ceased to breathe. I left things as decently as I could, though extremely shocked at the melancholy catastrophe. I must entreat your advice and assistance how to act in this business. It is an awkward affair, because, if a person is known to have died there, it will lead

lead to a number of unpleasant conjectures, and raise much curiosity among the ignorant people in the town."

This relation gave both my father and myself an infinite deal of concern, and pity for the wretched man overcame our detestation of his crimes. I felt more particularly hurt, as it was my curiosity had, I thought, accelerated his death.

After several plans formed and rejected, we could think of no possible means of removing the body without its being known; therefore were compelled to adopt a scheme least likely to cause speculation, which was to bring the unfortunate deceased down into the portico, where the blood on the stones, and the wound in his head, might make it appear as if he had met with his death by an accident, (which, in fact, is truth,) and that my father and Mr. Ross, discovering him, had, by papers in his pocket, found where his relations lived, and would take

care of the body till they had answers to their letters.

This plan was adopted, and the following morning was to be put into execution ; nor was Mrs. Gordon to be better informed than the public, a fictitious name being given to her.

It was now too late for me to call on Miss Gordon ; and, as I guessed her impatience would bring her early in the morning, I concluded it would be better to open the affair to her at our house than at home. In the morning Mr. Rofs and my father went out, as if to take an accustomed walk ; Miss Gordon, as I expected, came to me, and I gradually unfolded the melancholy tale. She was inexpressibly shocked, and shed many tears for the sad fate of a man who had brought so many calamities on her family, and who had met with such a terrible retribution in years of misery, and being so suddenly deprived of life.

In

In a short time after the gentlemen returned, and called for the assistance of some men, to whom the concerted story was related, to bring the body from the mount to Mr. Rofs's house, he giving his old woman orders to prepare a bed proper for the corps to be laid on, until a coffin, &c. could be got ready.

A story of this kind soon took wing, and the body was followed by an innumerable number of people, all making different observations, and forming a variety of conjectures.

I accompanied Miss Gordon to her mother, and, after a little preparation, told the unexpected event, which greatly shocked her, though entirely ignorant of the cause that produced it, his name, or story.

Six days since this terrible affair happened, and Mr. Rofs is hourly in expectation of receiving orders how to dispose of the body. He wrote to poor Morgan's sister, that her

L 5 brother

brother had lived a very reclusive life, and was fond of rambling among the ruins of an old castle, where, by the sudden breaking of some fragments, he received a wound, which eventually caused his death ; that he had lived in that neighbourhood under the name of Shannon, and therefore, to elude impertinent curiosity, he thought it most advisable any orders that were to be executed should go under the same name.

This letter was forwarded to a gentleman in London, who was desired to prepare the family for the receipt of it. This very melancholy business deeply affected us all, and threw a gloom over our spirits we could not shake off, particularly Miss Gordon, whose dejection was very visible through all her endeavours to conceal it.

Yesterday morning I received a note from her, requesting my presence immediately, that some joyful and unexpected news had thrown her mother into such agitations, that

that she was almost as severe a sufferer from joy as she had been by sorrow. My heart suggested the nature of this joy, and I hastened to share it. When I entered their little parlour, Miss Gordon was holding one of her mother's hands between both of her's,—drops and water on the table,—Mrs. Gordon, with all the marks of strong surprise; her looks fixed on her daughter.

When she saw me, she held out her other hand, attempted to speak, but joy had rendered her speechless. The struggle and agitation however produced a violent burst of tears, that gave her infinite relief, and enabled her to say, “My son!—my loved Henry! some angel, some good angel has rewarded him!—Gracious heaven! I adore thy goodness:—never let the wretched despair!”

She grasped my hand, leaned back in her chair, and tears for some moments bedewed all our cheeks.

L 6

Mine

Mine resulted from the purest pleasure the soul is capable of feeling, — that of having been instrumental to the happiness of the widow and fatherless.

When a little recovered, “My kind, my amiable, Miss Boyle! (said the transported Mrs. Gordon,) how good of you thus to sympathize with us! I cannot speak; my heart is too full! — Read this letter, and then wonder with me at an event so surprising, so unhopèd for.”

The letter shall also speak for itself to you, my dear Mrs. Rowe. Do not accuse me of vanity; it is a glow of innate satisfaction, arising, I hope, from a much better principle, that induces me to transcribe it.

MRS.

MRS. GORDON, at *Elgin*.

My revered and beloved Mother,

YOUR Henry writes with transport, sure of communicating to you an equal share of that joy which animates his heart. With what different sensations do I now take up the pen, than when I wrote to you last! What secret despair then preyed upon my mind!—now it is banished; the black clouds disappear, and I can speak peace and comfort to my dearest mother.

But why do I trifle with your impatience? Know then, in a few words, that your Henry is a lieutenant, rich, and *independent*.—Oh! what a transport does that little word convey to my soul!—But I will endeavour to be methodical.

Yesterday

Yesterday morning I received an order from General Hodgson to attend him at two o'clock. I was surprised at the message, as I had not the honour of being known to him but in my line of duty, and no such duty appeared to call for my attendance : I obeyed, therefore, under some degree of agitation, though I knew not why.

When I entered his apartment, he was alone. With an uncommon degree of politeness, he requested me to be seated.

“ Mr. Gordon, (said he,) I am going to take a great liberty ; yet, be assured, my motives are such as you will approve. May I request your confidence as to the situation of your family-connexions and your own prospects ?”

I was astonished. The request *was* singular, but I had nothing to disguise. False pride I discarded ; poverty and misfortunes, unattended by shame or disgrace, did not humble my spirit ; I therefore, after a moment's hesitation, candidly explained our situation..

situation. He seemed affected: "Your father I well remember, and grandfather also; both were deserving men. Your little story exactly corresponds with my information from another quarter, except in a few points, where delicacy has made you silent on your own merits. Know then, sir, I have received a letter from a friend, advising me that he wished to purchase a lieutenancy for a deserving young ensign."

"Pardon me, sir, (I cried,) but it is impossible I should be the person alluded to; I have not a friend in the world out of my own family."

He smiled: "I grant ye, sir, it is not very common for modest merit to attract notice or procure friends, but there are exceptions in all cases.—Pray hear me out."

I apologized for rudely interrupting him, and he proceeded.

"My friend in his letter gave me a brief account of your family, their misfortunes,

tunes, and your situation. He added, that he had been applied to for purchasing your promotion, and that two hundred pounds were lodged in his hands for that purpose. I was affected by the contents of this letter; I made my inquiries in the regiment; your conduct was unexceptionable;—an unsocial disposition in convivial meetings the only trait against you. This imputed fault I well knew how to account for, and gave you all due credit. I lost no time, therefore, in exerting my interest, and most fortunately, by an exchange, have succeeded in procuring a lieutenancy for you in my own regiment. There is your commission, sir, and likewise the bills for two hundred pounds, lodged in my hands; I shall accept of nothing more than your ensigncy for a friend in exchange, for your commission has been obtained by interest. The deposited money is your property, and will, I hope, free you from every embarrassment; if not, freely tell me so.”

My

My dearest mother, my loved sister, think what were the feelings of your Henry! It was the voice, the benignity of an angel, dispensing peace and comfort. Words were not lent to me at that moment; I blushed for the *soldier*, but I felt as a *man*.—My silence was expressive. The good general rose; “Recover yourself, my friend. Your emotion is a reflection on human nature.—You are surprised that there are beings in the world capable of distinguishing and rewarding merit. Your first friend is as unknown to me as to yourself; but it must be one who is well acquainted with every part of your conduct. My friend was employed in confidence, and therefore you must be content to receive such proofs of esteem, without knowing from whom.”

By this time I had recalled my fluttering spirits, and with all the warm gratitude of a much-obliged heart, I expressed my sense of the General’s undeserved favours.

He

He evaded every acknowledgment, and invited me to dine with him "Hold fast your integrity, sir; do honour to the character you have acquired; continue to be proof against the temptations of the idle and extravagant, and it shall be my care to procure for you respectability and attention."

O my dear mother! this was by far the happiest day of my life. I instantly sent, and discharged every obligation, to my agent, and am independent. One hundred and fifty pounds are lodged in the hands of Mr. Macniel, the banker, for your use and orders; and I request my dear mother will have a better habitation and more comforts. My former pay, free of all deductions, will do every thing I can wish for myself; the present increase, therefore, is your's, and will I trust add a little to your accommodations and happiness.

But, good heavens! where shall I find that generous benefactor, to whom I am so largely

largely indebted? What would I give for an opportunity to pour out the feelings of my soul to a mind so noble, so superior to praise! This is indeed true generosity!

My heart is so full, so entirely occupied with wonder, gratitude, and delight, that I am incapable of describing its various emotions.

Sleep fled from my eyes last night. I saw my mother, my dear Emma, embracing, and shedding the delicious tears of joy, when their Henry's letter was perused. Would to heaven our unknown friend and my good general could witness the transports they have given birth to! — a gratification to such minds far superior to the most elaborate thanks.

But let me now conclude, for I am robbing you of many very precious moments, and I long to hear that you are happy.

May

May ever blessing of heaven attend my
revered mother and my beloved sister !

Your truly dutiful

And affectionate

HENRY GORDON.

If you have the least clue to unravel this
mystery, do not delay it.—It is not Colonel
Chewton, whom I first suspected.

Now, my dear Mrs. Rowe, that you have
read the letter, tell me, is not this an ami-
able young man ? and do you not think
your little friend was abundantly gratified
by the consciousness of having given tran-
sport to such a mind as his ? Surely there
is

is no vanity nor error in the self-gratulation I felt.

The ladies seemed impatient till I had perused the letter. Their eyes sparkled with pleasure; joy illumined every feature, and words were unnecessary to convey the sentiments which glowed in their cheeks. I congratulated them with unfeigned pleasure: they spoke of their darling son and brother with enthusiasm and delight. One little drawback there was,—they knew not their benefactor. I mentioned the General; they acknowledged their warm obligations to him, but still the principal spring was unknown, nor could they divine who was so perfectly acquainted with their situation, as to interest themselves so effectually in their behalf.

I told them they must consider their acquisitions as fairy favours, which might at some future period be discovered; but any attempt

attempt to investigate the secret now would possibly give pain to the obliger.

“ Well then, (said Mrs. Gordon,) we must endeavour to repress gratitude and curiosity, and trust to time for the development of this mystery.”

I was pleased, however, to hear both ladies protest against any change in their house, or establishment ; neither would they accept of their generous Harry's offer to augment their income. Satisfied that they should not embarrass him, they were determined not to accept as a right, but be content to receive as a favour, any little pecuniary aid necessity should demand ; and perfectly reconciled to their present economical plan, with hearts at ease for their dear Henry's situation, they had nothing left to wish for.

I did homage to their virtue and disinterestedness, and secretly blessed the generous

Cranfield, whose benevolent hand has dispensed such transports to the truly deserving.

Our conversation, after a time, naturally reverted to the late melancholy event. Mrs. Gordon lamented the fatal termination of a life either marked by sorrow or guilt,—perhaps both; but she expressed very little curiosity as to his affairs or family, nor did I encourage her to dwell on the melancholy subject.

And now, my beloved friend, I shall close this large packet, which must be divided to be conveniently portable by post. Six sheets of paper! I am amazed at the quantity I have written. My sister jestingly told me I was going in quest of adventures, but I little expected to have been so nearly concerned in such uncommon events.

Once more adieu. My demands are large in the reciprocity of correspondence: pray
let

let them, at the earliest opportunity, be duly answered.

Your truly affectionate

MARY BOYLE.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

THE COUNTESS OF STANTON TO MISS

BOYLE.

FROM Bath, the delightful abode of gaiety, wit, and fashion, I address my sweet demure sister, seated romantically on the ruins of an old castle.

What a contrast, my dear, dear Mary This is the land of enchantment, and yet am told this is nothing to what it will be in the month of November. Every hour.

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M

is replete with entertainment and variety ; and, to crown the whole, I am in universal admiration,—quite the ton. Ah ! my good genius foresaw my triumphs, and guided me to this charming spot.

But hold !—You do not deserve that I should devote my time to your edification and amusement, for you are grown quite a churl. You tell me of nothing but sentimental rambles with a Miss Gordon and an old parson.—Pray is he a bachelor ? because, if he has no help-mate, I beseech you, my dear Mary, to become “ bone of his bone.” Nothing on earth can be more calculated for a parson’s wife than Miss Mary Boyle. You can assist in making sermons on the levity and folly of *young* folks : you can spread plasters, distill simples, keep family-accounts, and never sigh for midnight-balls, nor dear deceitful man.

“ It

"It must be so." I foresee that the country-parson's wife is the character which you have chosen to display all your talents of good housewifery. Well, success attend you. Our pursuits are so entirely different, that we shall at least steer clear of that baneful passion, envy; and, to prove that I am in perfect charity with you, however little you deserve, or value, my confidence, I shall scribble on whenever I have a spare moment, which, I assure you, I must catch as it offers; for not many moments have I which are disengaged from the various amusements that surround me.

But I shall go a little back.—On the day appointed, we set off, in full cavalcade, from Stanton-Place! I with secret exultation,—the rest of the party with apparent indifference. Indeed I endeavoured to *look* with only a common cheerfulness, though I was not a little delighted, that,

M 2

by

by my management, the scheme had succeeded so well.

Sir Roger went to London. The parting between him and his daughter was in the penferoso style ; for the old man has turned all his fondness towards her, having no other object to claim a share of it.

The girl has been so pleased with marks of affection she had never been accustomed to, that she really was very sorrowful, and more than half-inclined to accompany him, had not aunt Nell and Almeria interfered, and the old knight promised to return to us within four or five months ;—so we left him to the comforts of a quondam widow-hood, and carried off his daughter.

My lord told me Sir William Allen and his brother follow us in a day or two.—That man will be our shadow ; and, though he pretends to be without hope, and protests his *tongue* shall be silent, yet he contrives

trives that his eyes shall say a great deal ; and, by the stale pretence of friendship, flatters himself he may sap the foundation of indifference. It is seldom that perseverance fails, where esteem is allowed, and I think, if he manages his artillery with judgment, he may carry the town yet.

A very easy and pleasant journey brought us to Bath. The very air seemed to animate my spirits, and promise future delights. Mrs. Moystyn had kindly prepared a neat well furnished house for us, the city, *as she said*, being not very full ; that is, every house is not crowded, but it appears to me to have an abundance of good company.

The morning after we came, we walked to the Pump-room, and I was absurd enough to be seen lolling on my lord's arm. It was horrid provoking in him to let me make myself so ridiculous, as you shall hear.

M 3

Very

Very soon after we had walked the room, Sir James Nichols and a very genteel fashionable-looking man approached. The former seemed inclined to have past us after the common compliments; but, whether my lord was ashamed of his former unpoliteness and foolish ideas, or was tired of having so many females tacked to him, —whatever it was I know not, but, to my infinite surprise, he behaved so very graciously to Sir James, that he took courage to join our party, and introduced Mr. Molyneux as an Irish gentleman of fashion. His name was not unknown to Lord Stanton, and he was received with civility.

I threw a glance at Almeria. She looked confused and uneasy.—It is necessary that I should tell you, Lord Stanton having been officiously informed, that, before we came to Stanton-Place, Sir James had made pretensions to his sister's favour, which

which he afterwards slighted, and from which was supposed to originate the great change in her disposition and health,—he had closely questioned Almeria upon the subject.

She, either conscious that she had deceived herself, or apprehensive of the consequences between the gentlemen, assured her brother no particular attentions had passed between them, nor was she at all offended, in any shape, with Sir James.

Here I believe she fibbed a little; but no matter; it satisfied Lord Stanton, and was one cause of the civility I so little expected to see.

But to return.—When we were walking, Sir James said to me, “Two gentlemen told Molyneux and I that a very beautiful woman had just entered the room, who was said to be Lady Stanton; but, as the lady was leaning on the *arm* of the gentle-

M 4

man,

man, whom they knew to be his *lordship*, they thought it must be a mistake, as *he* knew the world better than to make himself ridiculous, or render his wife singular by her *country-breeding*."

These last words were spoken with a sneer that mortified my pride excessively, but he went on.—

"Knowing his lordship had some few peculiarities, I conceived it possible I might be blessed with a sight of your ladyship, and therefore hastened Molyneux to the room. Thank heaven! I was not mistaken."

Before I had time to make any reply, Stanton, who had been talking to Molyneux and some others, joined me, and the conversation became general.

They attended us home, and I thought our new acquaintance seemed uncommonly attentive to Almeria. I suppose he is fond
of

of the penforoso style, and she is quite a languishing beauty,—if a beauty she can be thought.. They were invited into the house, but declined it from a pre-engagement.

My lord looked at me as if he had done an act of supererogation, that deserved to be taken notice of; but I appeared perfectly indifferent to what had passed. Not so aunt Nell :—her mouth was pursed up,—the scraggy neck drawn above half a yard high, and every muscle in her face working with rage.—

“ I wonder, nephew, you should appear so desirous to renew an intimacy with that conceited fellow, who has nothing to recommend him but assurance and vanity, and only fit to sow discord in every family.”

“ My dear aunt, (replied the nephew, with a careless consequential air,) Sir James Nichols is a good-humoured insignificant

M 5
fellow,”

fellow, allowed by all the world to have fashion and entertainment about him, and so perfectly satisfied with himself, that he follows a lady only as an appendage in her suite, and is, at the same time, equally harmless as her lap-dog."

Now do you know, Mary, I was piqued and offended for this "*harmless*" fellow.—It was with difficulty I restrained my resentment; the old maiden however shook her head;—"Don't tell me, my lord; I have seen many such entertaining vain fellows insinuate themselves into favour,—many contemptible male flirts, who, to gratify their vanity, pay marked attention to women,—follow them like their shadows,—*look* themselves into their *hearts*, but are careful enough to avoid direct explanations, or *words* that shall entitle a father or a brother to call them to an account, when they think proper to change the object of their attentions. Such men are dangerous to

to the peace of *women*, and too often sap the foundation on which *domestic* happiness is built."

A serious air for a moment overspread the features of Lord Stanton, but he presently turned to me with a smile: "My aunt gives Sir James much more consequence than I think he deserves; but, however, she is an excellent Pharos to guard the ladies against the *supposed* attractions of this redoubtable man."

I had half an inclination to ask him, how long since *he* had thought so lightly of Sir James's powers, but I have acquired wonderful command of myself, and therefore, like a good wife, only returned the smile. Almeria also was entirely silent; but Miss Maria, in her profound wisdom, remarked "that, indeed, the careless self-consequence of the gentleman in question would always counteract his looks of assumed admiration, which he seemed equally ready to

display to any person who would gratify his predominant passion of self-love."

"Has he then ever practised on you, Miss Penrickard?" I asked.

"*Me*, madam, (she replied, with a fixed look,) no, indeed! I am but "a mere child," and consequently not worth the notice of Sir James Nichols."

O conscience, conscience! how thou playest the tyrant!—Those few words, from an insignificant girl, covered me with confusion. "A meer child" were the epithets bestowed upon me by Sir James in his tête-à-tête with Lady Penrickard.—Whether overheard by Maria as well as myself, or uttered accidentally by her, I know not; but they stuck on my memory, and vexed me extremely. I had not nothing for it but an affected laugh, rose, and retired to change my dress.

What a variety of character this place produces! — I quitted you yester-day for
my

my dressing-room ; and, having ordered some little ornaments, which could not be completed till this evening, I deferred my appearance at the rooms till to-morrow, which is a ball-night.—By the bye, Lord Stanton dropped a hint about indecorum in going there soon, but I drew up a little, and muttered something, about affectation in being singular, that silenced him.

Well, yesterday being a kind of stupid hum-drum day, (after the morning,) Mrs. Eleanor proposed a visit to Mrs. Moystyn, whose kind exertions for our accommodation had laid her up in a gouty complaint the night preceding our arrival. Any where was preferable to sitting at home without company, so I readily gave my assent. and away we sallied to aunt Moystyn's lodgings.

She was in her drawing-room, confined to her easy chair ; a very good woman, I dare

dare say, "who never did an ill thing, nor ever said a wife one." We were received with kindness and respect. Two young misses were with her, who lodged in the same house, and whose mamma we found was every moment expected. I thought our aunt looked as if she was sorry there would be a mixed company. I am a good diviner; for, in three minutes, mamma made her appearance, dressed to the extreme of the fashion, with all the colours of the rainbow about her.

After we were announced, she seated herself in a little quiet corner, to take an accurate survey of our persons and drefs. Lord Stanton, who likes to lift people into consequence, addressed himself to both mother and daughters occasionally, which, at length, conquered their timidity, and they began to exhibit for the amusement of the company. But first I should tell you, who they are.

Mamma

Mamma is the widow of a fox-hunting squire in Nottinghamshire, who galloped himself into the other world, by riding and drinking, four years ago, leaving the Misses Welldon five thousand pounds each, with as much more at the decease of their mamma.

Mrs. Welldon was a Somersetshire miss, a beauty, forsooth; a gentleman-farmer's daughter, bred up at the barn-door, and, like his fowls, pure, plump, and white; with the advantage also of being at a boarding-school in a neighbouring town, where she picked up the fund of knowledge she exhibited so largely in the course of the evening.—

Her pretty-enough daughters have been also at a country boarding-school, where they learned affectation and self-conceit, with a very trifling smattering of such accomplishments as can be taught by persons resident in a country-village.

They

They were now, for the first time in their lives, exhibited at Bath; and, having apartments in the same house with Mrs. Moystyn, were upon a very sociable footing.

Lord Stanton asked if they had been long at Bath?

“Yes, sure! (replied Mrs. Welldon;) we have been here a matter of three weeks, and have spent more money than would have served us three months at home; but these here people know how to turn a penny, and make one pay dear enough for pleasure, though, for the matter of that, I see no such great pleasure neither, for my part.”

“Lord, mamma! (cried one of the misses,) how difficult you are! I am sure it is quite delightful;—the Pump-room in the morning,—then the library,—then the rooms in the evening,—then sometimes at Spring-Gardens,—then the plays, and concerts, and

and dressing, and shopping!—Dear me, if the days were half as long again, one should find amusement enough.”

“But I should suppose, (said I, that if every thing were seen every day, the want of variety would soon render those places tiresome and insipid, unless, indeed, you should have a very large circle of fashionable acquaintance.”

“I know nothing at all of the *circle*, my lady; and, as to acquaintance, I assure you, my lady, I have not seen any body at Bath that we know; and I see no such pleasure in going about to them there places, where the people are most of them so proud, and look one quite down into nothing; whereas, if you'll believe me, my lady, at home every one pays us respect, and bows and curtesies when we come among them.”

Aunt Nell, who has much of the pride of ancestry about her, looked so stately at
poor

poor Mrs. Welldon, that it put her a little out of countenance.

“ In public places like Bath, (said she,) unless people are well known, they must expect to be unnoticed. Three ladies, coming without any escort, and strangers both to the place and company, could scarcely suppose they would attract any respect, because no one knows they are entitled to it.”

“ I am sure, (said the other miss, with a face as red as a turkey-cock,) *every one* knows we have good fortunes and a good family too ; and we were told all watering places were so sociable and so gay, that we should soon have acquaintance enough ; but, except Mrs. Moystyn, we have not had a soul to speak to, and what signifies wandering about all them there rooms, as if we belonged to nobody. I wanted to go to Margate ; they say that is a very sociable place.”

“To

“To Margate ! (cried the other mis ;) I wonder you can talk so, Biddy.—There’s none but trade’s folks goes to Margate — I dare say, in a little time, we shall have friends enough when we come to be better known.”

I give you this as a specimen of our conversation, and the characters of this mother and her daughters, come in search of *respect* and *friends* at Bath, with no other recommendations than their *good fortunes*. For an hour or two I was diverted by their ignorance and ideal consequence, but I grew tired of their insipidity.

Aunt Nell looked at them with sovereign contempt, not quite consistent with the politeness on which she values herself.

Poor Mrs. Moystyn seemed in the fidgets during the whole of the visit, as the misses grew disagreeably familiar with Maria, from her being untitled, and teased her

her to death about the fashions and the prices of catgut, gauze, ribbons, and lace; telling her, by way of return, for *her* information, which was little enough, "of a nice place they had found out for cleaning of gloves and a cheap shoe-shop, for that, really, gloves and shoes, in this here Bath, were expensive things, because they must always be clean and smart."

At length we released Mrs. Moystyn, for the ladies were determined to out-stay us, because, as they said, "they were at home."

On our return, I expressed my apprehensions, that they would not miss so fair an opportunity of being *known* to *somebody*, and that we should be bored with them when we appeared in the rooms. My lord laughed at their oddities, but dame Eleanor protested, that *she* should take care to keep them at a distance, for, they were bold in their ignorance.

This

This morning, thank heaven! without that eternal aunt Nell at my elbow, we made our appearance once more at the rooms.

“How great was my triumph! how supreme my delight!”—The moment I entered, a buz ran round the room,—“that is Lady Stanton!” “What a beautiful woman! what a charming creature!—how lovely! how elegant!”

Yes, my dear Mary, this, and much more, reached my ears; and, blame me if you will, I confess I grew three inches taller, and “looked disdain on little folks below.”

The first time I made my appearance, I could discover admiration in the face of every man,—scouling envy in those of the women; but, this morning, a crowd absolutely followed my steps wherever I moved;—and even my lord looked exultation!

Think

Think, then, my dear Mary, whether I shall not grow giddy and intoxicated this night, when I mean to appear at the ball, with all the paraphernalia of drefs and ornament, that this horrid black will admit of.

Indeed, indeed, my wife fister, you may lecture me to eternity, but there is positively no refifting the charm of praise and adulation.

I am now waiting for my hair-dresser, for Willis is not sufficiently acquainted with the Bath fashions for me to risk my head under her hands for this night.

Adieu. My friseur is come. I will not close this letter till after to-morrow.

Mary, your fister is the fashion of the day. I am not easily put out of countenance by admiration, yet I absolutely blushed last night at my own consequence.

It

It is impossible, child, to give you any idea of my importance ; neither have I leisure to write now.

Half a hundred beaux have been here this morning. Every one seemed to court the attention of Lord Stanton, as a passport to an acquaintance with my ladyship.

Sir James and Mr. Molyneux stuck close to us, and were universally envied.—Dame Eleanor looked as cross as any old virgin in the kingdom. —“ Lady Almeria was not *quite* easy to be in the shade, and poor Maria shrunk into her humble insignificance.

I must leave off till a more convenient opportunity :—heaven knows when that may be ! The two Allens are come to us this morning ; — the fairest chance in the world now for Sir William ! When his admired lady is thrown in the back ground, she will be thankful for the honour of his notice.

Once

Once more adieu. In due time you shall know more.

Your affectionate

C. M. STANTON.

That ridiculous Lady Dainty, Mrs. Grantham, and her doating husband, are come to visit us from Bristol.—Now for a volume of complaints to prove her delicacy.

END OF VOL. II.





